



THE WEEK



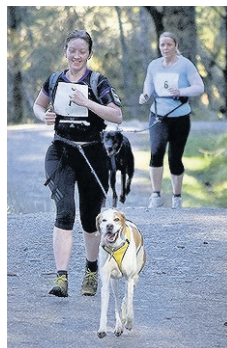
Following the mauve and crimson hues of dawn, the summit of Stob Dearg is illuminated by the winter sun. During December and January, the sun's trajectory through the sky follows a low arc, which starves the

landscape of light and keeps north-facing slopes in shadow all day. By comparison, the sun in mid-summer will illuminate the entire face in a frontal light on to which your own shadow will appear in bold relief.

IT'S A CANI BIT OF FUN

Join the fun of the fast-rising sport of canicross at a one-day event in Clackmannanshire.

Canisports Scotland invite owners and their dogs, of all fitness levels, to the races at Coalsnaughton, near Alloa, on March 23. The two main races are 2.5km and 5.5km, while kids and less confident adults can try the 2km fun run, with prizes in age groups and classes, for best newcomer and muddiest pair. Visit [www.canisportsscotland.com](http://www.canisportsscotland.com) for more information.



SANDISON'S SCOTLAND

BRUCE SANDISON IS A JOURNALIST, ANGLER AND AUTHOR OF A STRING OF BEST-SELLING BOOKS ABOUT SCOTLAND'S OUTDOORS. HE LIVES IN SUTHERLAND.



MAKING FLY-FISHING A JOYFUL GENERATION GAME TO PASS DOWN

**T**he Ides of March were bad news for Julius Caesar – in spite of being warned that day not to go out, he did and was assassinated by Marcus Brutus and his pals.

Trout anglers are much more cheerful about the Ides of March because, in Scotland, the 15th of that month heralds the start of the wild brown trout fishing season.

If you don't fly-fish, then this is the time to come along and join us and, believe me, you will not regret doing so.

Fly-fishing in Scotland is not elitist. Neither is it expensive. The beginner can set themselves up in business for about £100 – eBay have a great range of excellent tackle on sale, as will your local angling shop.

Much of the best of Scotland's wild brown trout fishing – hill lochs and remote streams – costs between £5 and £10 a day. Seek advice from someone you know who fishes or from the Scottish Anglers' National Association (SANA) – [www.sana.org.uk](http://www.sana.org.uk) or call 01577 861116. SANA can also direct you to professional casting instructors.

Like most anglers, I had my little foibles, in fact, four of them, two boys and two girls – although my wife Ann played a significant role. As our children grew older, we introduced them to fly-fishing.

Teaching little ones to fly-fish is better than putting money in the bank for them because cash comes and goes but a love of fishing will stay throughout their lives.

I taught our children basic angling skills in a field rather than on river or loch.

Over the years, I have seen so many anglers wasting hard-earned holiday time worrying about casting when a couple of hours practising in the garden would save them endless stress and embarrassment. And, honestly, it's like riding a bike – once mastered, never forgotten.

The natural rivalries amongst our children were channelled into an absorbing pastime and, during frequent family outings, developed in them respect for Scotland's landscape and wildlife. Blair, the eldest, began fishing at the age of five in Orkney. Lewis-Ann first picked up a rod when we were staying at Scourie in North West Sutherland.

Second son, Charles, caught his first trout in Loch Sletill in East Sutherland. He was eight and had enjoyed the walk – particularly when his mother stumbled into a peat bog up to her waist and he rescued her. Jean fished with us from a boat on Loch Eaglaise-Mor, south of Melvich, I surreptitiously hooked a trout, handed her the rod and had to fight to get it back.

They have long since flown the nest and now have children of their own, all of whom fish.

Fishing has been good to Clan Sandison and will be to you and yours, too. And come March 15, I'll be saying the words I wrote many years ago: "For salmon, trout and sea-trout/For all fish great or small/Let thanks be given before we cast/To Him who gave us all."



STARTING YOUNG Bruce's grandson Jake with his first trout

TAKE THREE..

The kids will have a lot more fun on a family camping holiday this spring or summer if you buy them a child-friendly sleeping bag.

SAVE

Hi Gear Junior Commando sleeping bag

A camouflage print sleeping bag in a modern mummy-shaped design and it packs into a stuff bag for easy storage. £12.99 (with discount card), [www.gooutdoors.co.uk](http://www.gooutdoors.co.uk)



SPEND

Vango Wilderness Junior Penguin bag

A mummy-shaped, penguin-themed sleeping bag is cosy and practical. Ideal for younger children, it features zip guards and handy internal pockets. £28, [www.vango.co.uk](http://www.vango.co.uk)

SPLURGE

Deuter StarLight EXP sleeping bag

A high-quality sleeping bag with good insulation, a hood and a zipped extension for when your little camper has a growth spurt. £69.99, [www.ellis-brigham.com](http://www.ellis-brigham.com)

