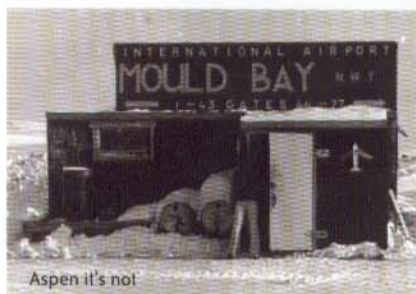


Working in London on a ski magazine, he found the city increasingly 'grey and depressing' and resorted to weekly visits to the cinema in Leicester Square to see 'Highlander'. He admits to having seen the movie at least 20 times, and each time sat in the front row to get the full Highland landscape 'right in his face'. With London completely out of his system, he and Sally moved north to Inverness. By 1989 they had found their old croft house, married, and acquired a dog, Towzer - an interesting cross between a pedigree poodle and Scottish cairn terrier.

By this time, Thorne had become increasingly disillusioned with what he considered to be the tedious repetition of the same dozen articles on the same dozen ski resorts, season after season. He started reading guide books to Poland and establishing pen pals in the Korean National Tourist Office. Soon he found dozens, then hundreds, and ultimately thousands of 'new' ski areas around the globe that no one else had apparently ever bothered to collect together. Why not? He still hasn't worked it out.



Aspen it's not

The Snowhunter battled on, compiling ever-more comprehensive lists of the world's ski areas. Demand for a list of all the resorts in Czechoslovakia was surprisingly limited in the early 90s, but Thorne got a job literally 'putting ski resorts on the map' - placing those little skier icons at a fiver a time in road atlases.

Although far from being an extreme skier, Thorne is clearly obsessed with ski resorts. Research has taken him on a mid-summer visit to Blafjoll in Iceland, to look at ski lifts.



No snow here...

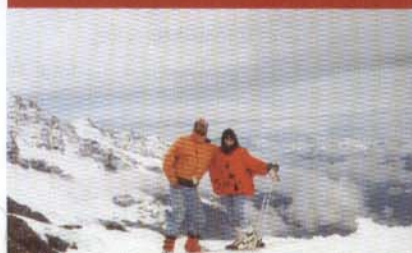
A trip to post-glasnost Russia to compare life there with that in Britain resulted in 'Life, We're All In It Together' - a frank account of life in the Soviet Union seen through the eyes of a British author. It took three months on a remote Scottish island to write the book that would have earned him the grand sum of £1 - had his payment, fixed in roubles, not arrived just before the currency collapsed.

He used the trip to locate over 100 Russian ski centres, including a mining colony in northern Siberia, where night skiing is prescribed free of charge to the locals by their doctors to ward off the physical effects of four months of polar night. SnowHunter heaven! Today SnowHunter has evolved into the planet's biggest ski resort database. Now part of Snow24 plc, he has four staff working in state-of-the-art offices near Loch Ness. The Snow Hunter's obsession with information about the obscure is alive and well, and he is still discovering 'unknown' ski resorts in Japan. And when he chances upon a detailed report from some skiing backwater where he perhaps had an area name and a few statistics but no real reports, his eyes still light up. 'Yes!' he says. And another little flag goes into the skiing globe.

Snowhunter online: [www.snow24.com](http://www.snow24.com)



...but it's a wonder he ever gets to any resorts when it does snow



SNOWHUNTER SNOWHUNTER