

## Thornborough & Thornton WI: April and May 2017

So what might persuade a person to nip off to Alaska for a bit of a break? An easy answer for determined Victorians: the gold rush in the Klondike. Earthquake fans may have made a beeline for these parts in 1964, following the second largest earthquake in the world. Another 'rush' occurred when oil was discovered there and from 1980's onwards there has been something of a 'tourist rush'.

But why? This huge landmass with a miniscule population by comparison, is mainly comprised of woodlands, mountains and rivers with only two seasons per year, resulting in a land of snow and deserts. Following 16 hours on an aeroplane to get there, it takes an age to navigate long roads, trains, internal flights and car journeys. Clearly, this is not in travel-catalogue-speak, but Clive Pepper – who delighted us at our April talk with his tales of Alaska – managed to convince us all, that a visit would be well worth the effort.

Alaska is spectacular, he said (and demonstrated with a range of slides). As well as well-chosen historical and geographical information, it was the quirky small details that amazed and delighted. For example: in Anchorage, locals are allowed to fish only three large salmon per day from the river; in Moose Creek, there is a population of two couples and two dogs; in Skagway there's a brothel called *The Red Onion Saloon*; at their national park (the size of Wales) you can take a coach ride to view moose, bears (mainly grisly) and other wildlife mooching around, crossing the road in front of the coach! Clive Pepper's enthusiasm could well trigger a mass exodus from Thornborough to Alaska in coming months.

In May, our group discussed two important resolutions which will be the basis for national action. The one which prompted most discussion concerns Plastic Soup: Keeping microplastic fibres out of our oceans. Microplastic fibres are shed from synthetic clothing with every wash and are the main contributors to microplastic contamination of the oceans. The NFWI calls on Government and industry to research and develop innovative solutions to this problem in order to stop the accumulation of microplastic fibres in our oceans.

Hopefully it is obvious in this report, that what makes being a member of the W.I. worthwhile, is that you get to hear about amazing places and people and subjects and can also play a small but important role in influencing policy decisions at the highest level. A once-a-month alternative to a night of TV comes highly recommended.

First Wednesday in every month; 7.30pm; Village Hall; join us!

