

## **PARASITES**

As I was the speaker at the OWLS December meeting, it is difficult for me to say whether it was good, bad or indifferent. What I can say is that I enjoyed giving the presentation and that the audience was attentive and enthusiastic especially regarding questioning, to the point that a halt had to be called to the meeting to allow the staff of the centre to go home.

I called upon my lifelong experience as a lecturer and researcher in parasitology to explain the fascinating world of parasites and to emphasize their ecology and the ways in which they are so perfectly adapted to their precarious life styles. The talk addressed issues including how parasites (from single celled organisms that cause malaria to complex animals that we call tapeworms, flukes and roundworms) are equipped for life. Also, how they find their host on, or in, which to live, how they attach or gain entry into them, and how they survive their hosts' defences.

Naturally the adverse effects of parasites entered into the equation and there were brief references to the impact on humans and animals in general of parasitic diseases.

**Keith Snow**