

The species of mosquitoes that are vectors in Australia do not occur in Britain, and because there is no evidence that any mosquitoes feed on wild rabbit populations in Britain it has been considered that in this country they are not vectors. During ecological studies on mosquitoes in southern England I became interested in the possibility that mosquitoes might in fact feed, to some extent at least, on rabbits. Various types of traps were therefore baited with rabbits and placed amongst vegetation in areas where there were known to be large mosquito populations. The presence of mosquitoes, some of which had fed on the rabbits, in the traps seemed to indicate that mosquitoes were attracted to rabbits. However it was realised that bait rabbits enclosed within traps presented a very unnatural situation, therefore rabbits were tethered, by wire attached to a collar on their necks, to a tree. This allowed considerable freedom of movement by the rabbits, which were then visited at intervals and any mosquitoes biting, or attempting to bite, collected. Nevertheless even these catches were not made under entirely natural conditions. It was therefore decided to try to collect blood-engorged mosquitoes that rested during the day amongst vegetation so that serological methods could be used to identify the blood-meals in the mosquitoes stomach. Many hundreds of blood-meal identifications were performed on mosquitoes collected by this method and a number of several different species was shown to have fed on wild rabbits. This seemed to prove that mosquitoes were feeding on rabbits, but there remained the slight possibility that all these meals were from comatose rabbits suffering from advanced stages of myxomatosis, and that mosquitoes were incapable of taking a blood-meal from healthy active rabbits. If this was so, then although mosquitoes could readily pick up the virus they would be unable to transmit the disease to healthy rabbits. I therefore looked for an area which had a large rabbit population free from myxomatosis. Lundy island was an obvious choice, and during my short stay in the summer of 1970 I was able to collect a few blood-fed mosquitoes by sweeping grassy and scrub vegetation with a net. Some of these were found to contain rabbit blood. It is inconceivable that all these individuals had fed on healthy rabbits on the mainland and then flown across to the island. It therefore appears that in Britain mosquitoes do, at least under certain ecological conditions, feed on wild healthy rabbits, and are thus potential vectors of myxomatosis. This, however, does not mean that they are important vectors: their role, if any, may be minimal.

#### DISCOVERY OF FLINT ARROWHEAD

On May 19th 1970 Mr. P. Atkins while on holiday on Lundy discovered a perfect flint arrowhead at the northwestern edge of the plateau.

The flint was seen protruding from the peat in an area already known for its neolithic settlement and after excavation was found to measure 33 mm. overall by 22 mm wide. At its thickest point the flint measured 3.5 mm.

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