

November

PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBER 18 -- This month it is our privilege to hear from one of our staunch and enthusiastic members, possibly from husband and wife. Most of our programs have been on local and national subjects. This month we're to hear about the country of England.

Dr. and Mrs. John G. Hocking have spent a year in England where Dr. Hocking was on sabbatical leave from MSU to lecture and write on the subject of mathematics. In addition to his busy schedule, he and his wife took a little time out for our hobby. They are to relate some of their experiences in collecting and observing the kinds of rocks found in England and surrounding areas.

Dr. Hocking is a past president (1964) of Central Michigan Lapidary and Mineral Society.

Elmer Eckhardt, Program Chairman

Field Trip-- There will be a field trip to Bayport on Saturday November 13 to the Wallace Stone Quarry. This is Bayport limestone, Mississippian Age. Go 1.5 miles south from Bayport on M-75 then east on 142 to the quarry. You have to be there no later than between 10: and 11:00 a.m. If you are any later you will not be able to go in. We have to sign a release.

IDENTIFICATION -- Specific Gravity and Effervescence

Knowing the weight of a specimen is helpful. After handling different specimens for a while, one can usually tell whether a given piece feels heavy or light for its size. This sometimes give a clue, especially in the dark-colored pieces, as to whether a certain one is an ore or just one of the dark-colored rocks.

To actually find the specific gravity requires a little investment in equipment, as an analytical balance, a jolly balance, or a series of heavy liquids, such as mineralogists use, is needed.

Specific gravity is the ratio of the weight of a substance to that of a like volume of water. The specimen is weighed both in and out of water and then a simple equation is followed to determine specific gravity. Directions for doing this are found in most mineral books.

There is one simple test (it is really chemical instead of physical) that will help to distinguish between some common specimens, such as quartz and calcite or sandstone and limestone. This is to put a drop of hydrochloric acid on the piece. If calcium carbonate is present, as in calcite and limestone, it will effervesce or fizz. It is sometimes suggested that vinegar can be used for this test, but it is such a weak acid that it is not satisfactory.

Frank and Eleanor Owens