As part of the 50th birthday celebration, we are arranging to reprint 12 papers, *the Editor's Choice*, which have appeared in previous issues of the *Journal*. They have been chosen partly to illustrate the range and scope of the *Journal* over the years and partly because they are or were important in their day. More significantly, they have been chosen because they exemplify some of the best in scientific writing and can all be read with great pleasure and all who wish to communicate their observations, their ideas, or their enthusiasms would do well to study them and learn from them.

We will publish one paper each month through the year and they will appear in the order in which they were originally published.

Editor's Choice

Individual variations in sickness absence

by P J Taylor

(*British Journal of Industrial Medicine* 1967;24:169-77)

Peter Taylor contributed more to the study of sickness absence than almost anyone else and there is little known about it now that does not have its origins in his work. Much of his research was based on the records held by the Post Office but the present study was undertaken when he was medical officer for Shell UK. His work on sickness absence pointed to the different aetiology of short term and long term absence and demonstrated the role that the occupational health service had in both its management and its control. He emphasised strongly that, in the investigation of the cause of absence in a particular case, the occupational physician was to act

as a conciliator and not a disciplinarian.

Taylor held many senior industrial posts but he was also on the staff of the TUC Centenary Institute of Occupational Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. There he was instrumental in establishing the information and advisory service, later becoming deputy director of the institute and much later, visiting professor. He played a substantial part in setting up the Faculty of Occupational Medicine in the Royal College of Physicians and served for three years as Dean. His untimely death in 1987 at the early age of 57, when he was still at the height of his powers, was a great loss.

Notice

The Scientific Work of Martin Gardner 21 October 1993, the Wellcome Trust, London NW1 The *British Medical Journal*, the Medical Research Council Environmental Epidemiology Unit, and the Medical Section of the Royal Statistical Society for Social Medicine are holding a one day conference to discuss the work of Martin Gardner, who died prematurely at the beginning of this year.

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