William Malcolm Millar, formerly Professor of Psychiatry, University of Aberdeen

Malcolm Millar, who died on the 24 January 1996, became Crombie Ross Professor of Psychiatry at Aberdeen in 1949, at the age of 36, becoming the third professor of psychiatry in Scotland, and the youngest in the UK. He held the position for the next 27 years, during which time he transformed the Aberdeen psychiatric scene. He was not an academic psychiatrist; he wrote few scientific papers and conducted little psychiatric research. His strengths lay in his clinical, teaching and administrative abilities. He was one of the most psychodynamic of British professors. While in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Edinburgh he had a year of personal analysis with Ronald Fairbairn. Thereafter, he read widely and had many close contacts in the psychodynamic field, particularly J. D. (Jock) Sutherland, whom he greatly admired.

Shortly after his birth, on 20 April 1913, his family emigrated to South Africa, where his father died when he was quite young. He returned to Edinburgh, and was a pupil at George Heriot’s School. He attended Edinburgh University and graduated in medicine in 1936. He trained in psychiatry under Professor David Henderson, and gained high commendation for his MD thesis on aspects of the physical treatment of schizophrenia. The war prevented his taking up a Rockefeller Scholarship to study electro-encephalography in the USA. Instead he joined the RAMC in 1939, and became a psychiatric specialist, attaining the rank of major. Like Bowlby and Sutherland, he worked on officer selection procedures, and endeavoured, as he put it, to put the chi into psychiatry. The work generated such reports as A Rating Scale in Personality Assessment, A Critique of Leaderless Group Testing and A Training Manual of Officer Selection. In 1941, he married Catherine (Rena) Rankin.

In 1946, he moved to Aberdeen, where he was to spend the rest of his life. He took up the appointment of Senior Lecturer, in the newly created Department of Mental Health, and took over from Professor D. R. MacCalman as Head of the Department, three years later. At that time, psychiatric services in the city were minimal. There were the two large mental hospitals of Kingsseat and the Royal Cornhill, and a few beds at the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Over the next 10 years, against considerable opposition, he brought about many changes. In 1950, he created what became the Aberdeen Association for Mental Health, the aims of which were the provision of rehabilitation services, both day and residential, for former psychiatric patients; the training of volunteers in a range of psychiatric services; and the education of the public in mental health matters.

It must have been a moment of some pleasure for him when, in 1959, following much planning and collaboration with his NHS colleagues, the Ross Clinic was opened. This was an early treatment and neurosis unit, set in the grounds of the Royal Cornhill Hospital. It had 38 beds, provision for 20 day-patients, consulting rooms and activities areas. It became a focal point for both academic and clinical psychiatry, and was a stimulating environment for both undergraduate and postgraduate education. It housed departments of clinical psychology, occupational therapy and art therapy. Joyce Laing’s was the first art therapy post in Scotland, and one of the first in the UK.

His next venture was the setting up, in 1963, of the North East of Scotland Psychiatric Case Register, again in collaboration with many NHS and academic colleagues. Two smaller case registers had already been set up in Nottingham and Salford, but this was a larger and more ambitious enterprise. It was expertly managed and developed by John Baldwin and George Innes. Initially housed in a large house, as its staff and equipment grew, it was transferred to a custom-built site, again in the grounds of the Royal Cornhill, which became the Mental Health Research Unit. Such was the reputation of John Baldwin and his team, that the 1969 International Symposium of Psychiatric Epidemiology was held in Aberdeen.

In 1965, he realised a long-held ambition of establishing in Aberdeen a university-based diploma course in psychotherapy. It was to be the first of its kind in the UK. Initially a one-year, full-time course, it later was modified to a two-year, part-time one, in order that attendance could be combined with a paid, clinical post. The course was hampered by a shortage of both funding and trained psychotherapy staff. The course coordinator, Richard Mackie, was paid to travel fortnightly to the Tavistock Clinic in London to continue his psychotherapy training, and later a course graduate, Jim Gomersall, was made a lecturer, and Bill Ogston, who had gone to the USA to train in psychotherapy, was...
The deaths of the following have also been reported

ANN CRAFT, Department of Learning Disabilities, Nottingham University

EMANUEL FISCHER, Old South Mead Road, Rosebay, New South Wales

ALBERT KUSHLICK, Thornbury Avenue, Shirley, Hampshire

NOEL IGNATIUS LAVIN, Brookwood Hospital, Woking, Surrey

JOHN DOUGLAS LUCY, (retired) Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
COLIN McCANCE, (retired) Royal Cornhill Hospital, Aberdeen
JOAN McCONNELL, (retired) Rampton Hospital, Retford, Nottinghamshire
DERMOT JOSEPH MCDONNELL, Department of Child and Family Psychiatry, Thurlow House, Norfolk
MERVYN McILVENNA, St Loman’s Hospital, Mullinger, County Westmeath, Eire
WILLIAM MORISON McINTYRE, (retired) Maudsley Hospital, London
JAMES BARR McWHINNIE, (retired) Highfield Family and Adolescent Unit, Warneford Hospital, Headington, Oxford
JEAN PASMORE, (retired) Ham Gate Avenue, Ham Common, Richmond, Surrey
BARBARA RICHARDSON, (retired) Child Guidance Clinic, Scarborough, North Yorkshire
CONSTANCE DIX ROBERTS, Hellesdon Hospital, Norwich
JAMES FINLAY ROBERTSON, Wonthaggi Medical Centre, Victoria, Australia
JOHN ROMANO, (retired) Strong Memorial Hospital School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, New York, USA
WILLIAM CLIFFORD MUNRO SCOTT, (retired) Mount Pleasant, Westmount, Quebec, Canada
SHIRLEY SEATON, (retired) Manchester Royal Infirmary
ABDUR RAZZAQUE SIDIQUI, Department of Psychiatry, St Boniface Hospital, 409 Tache Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
DAPHNE SMEDBERG, (retired) Cane Hill Hospital, Surrey
CHARLOTTE STAGE, Ved Vigen 2, 2400 Copenhagen NV, Denmark
SINCLAIR STEWART SUTHERLAND, (retired) Hartwood Hospital, Lanarkshire
THEUNIS JEREMIA VAN DE MERWE, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pretoria, Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital, Pretoria, South Africa
JULIUS EDWARD VINCENZI, (retired) St John’s Hospital, Essex
ERIC ALEXANDER MASTERTON WOOD, Andrew Duncan Clinic, Royal Edinburgh Hospital