

The Honorary Graduand: Nathan Filer

The Orator: Dr Neil Summers

Nathan Filer is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Master of Letters.

Nathan Filer was born in Bristol in 1980. He attended The Ridings High School, and in 2005 completed an undergraduate degree in Mental Health Nursing at the University of the West of England, obtaining a first-class honours.

He worked as a staff nurse on an acute psychiatric ward at Southmead Hospital before taking up a role in mental health research at the University of Bristol. His work in this field focussed on service user and carer involvement in research.

He also worked as performance poet, contributing regularly to festivals and spoken-word events across the UK, and featuring on television and radio.

In 2013 his debut novel, *The Shock of the Fall*, was published in the UK. It describes the life of a young man from Bristol dealing with his grief at the death of his brother, and experience of mental health care services for schizophrenia.

This novel received wide critical acclaim, winning The Costa Book of the Year, The Betty Trask Prize, The National Book Award for Popular Fiction and The Writers' Guild Award for Best First Novel. It was a Sunday Times Bestseller, and has been translated into thirty languages.

Filer has been an outspoken critic of government cuts to NHS mental health care services, and has written about this for *The Guardian* newspaper. He has also spoken about these issues on national radio, and given numerous lectures at universities, conferences and charities – including the inaugural public lecture at the Royal College of Nursing, as part of World Mental Health Day.

In 2014 he was named as a *Nursing Times'* Nursing Leader for "influencing the way the public thinks about mental illness and mental health nursing".

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of Nathan Filer's role in raising awareness through literature and his commitment to mental healthcare.