

Paisley and District u3a Press Release: Tuesday 28 October 2025

Stargazing with Paisley and District u3a

Star gazers will soon be captivated when Coats Observatory officer, John Pressly shares some sky-at-night facts. He's speaking at Paisley and District u3a on Thursday 6 November. Given John is also the observatory's science curator, he'll include the town's long history of weather recording since 1858.

u3a chair, Kathy O'Donnell said: "I love the title of John Pressly's presentation: 'Over 140 years of staring into space.' Our members enjoy learning and John has over 20 years' of experience to draw on. Part of his role involves running public viewing nights at Coats Observatory. We'll find out about this - and Scotland's oldest public observatory."

The local u3a usually meets on the first Thursday of the month in Paisley's Salvation Army Hall at Mill Street (PA1 1ND). Refreshments are available from 1.30pm -2pm, prior to the start of the presentation.



Guest speaker, John Pressly commented: "Coats Observatory has a long and fascinating history, and I am looking forward to telling this story to Paisley and District u3a. It often surprises people that we have the country's first public observatory here in Paisley. Hopefully, this talk will reveal more of the hidden past of this marvellous building and the work carried on within."

Find u3a groups/activities and how to join at: <https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/>

ENDS

Notes to the Editor

1. **Photo credit:** John Pressly is Observatory Officer / Science Curator with Renfrewshire Council.
2. **John Pressly** is the guest speaker at Paisley and District u3a's monthly meeting on Thursday 6 November 2025 at 2pm in the Salvation Army Hall, Paisley, PA1 1ND. For more details or to interview John Pressly, please contact PR Advisor, Allana Parker on **M: 07483 820027**
3. John has been the curator at Coats Observatory since July 2005. He graduated from Glasgow University in 1993 with a degree in archaeology and worked on several excavations across the UK before moving to the museum world. He has held various roles across a number of institutions before ending up working in the museum in his home town, where he has been for the past two decades. Astronomy has always been an interest, or more accurately an obsession, and it really is a privilege to be working at Coats Observatory, literally being paid to stare into space!
4. Paisley and District u3a is Scotland's 50th self-help learning organisation for people who no longer work full time. u3as are run by local volunteers who freely share their knowledge and skills. Members are part of a UK-wide and international educational movement. The u3a motto is 'Learn, laugh, live.' Scotland has around 12,000 members in 55 u3as who enjoy the social side of new activities, interests and hobbies: <https://scotland.u3asite.uk/members/> Details on this nationwide peer-learning for fun movement, with more than 1,000 u3as in the UK, at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk>