

Paisley and District u3a Press Release:

No Embargo: Friday 23 January 2026

Crime writing secrets reveal to local u3a

Crime buffs are in for a treat. Scottish author, Ajay Close will be taking u3a members behind the scenes with an illustrated talk about her latest novel, *What Doesn't Kill Us*.

A former Renfrewshire writer in residence, Ajay Close based her most recent book around the Yorkshire Ripper case. Fifteen months ago *What Doesn't Kill Us* won the coveted Scottish fiction book of the year prize. Two of her other novels have been long listed for major literary prizes.

On Thursday 5 February at 2pm, Ajay will recall the shadow Peter Sutcliffe cast over her teenage years, an experience that inspired her first foray into crime writing. Sutcliffe – nicknamed the Ripper – murdered 13 women across the north of England. By the time he was arrested in 1981, about a mile from her home in Sheffield, Ajay had spent years looking over her shoulder, suspicious of every man she passed.

Later, as a journalist, she met two women whose lives were changed forever by the serial killer, the sex worker who narrowly escaped becoming his fourteenth victim and Sutcliffe's wife, Sonia.



"*What Doesn't Kill Us* is the book I've always known I was going to write," Ajay says. "As a journalist I went on to cover major news events, including the Miners' strike and the Handsworth riots, but in the late 70's I wasn't reporting on someone else's story. I was just a young woman in the north of England who went out alone after dark – exactly the demographic Peter Sutcliffe was targeting."

u3a chair, Kathy O'Donnell said: "This promises to be a fascinating talk. People often say life is stranger than fiction and Ajay's recent fictional book covers real events in the 1970s. I'm sure we will have plenty of questions to ask around this particular whodunit."

Refreshments at u3a monthly meetings are available from 1.30pm in the Salvation Army Hall, Mill Street (PA1 1ND).

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

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Notes to the Editor

1. **Photo credit: Craig Stephen**
2. **Ajay Close** is the speaker at Paisley and District u3a's monthly meeting on Thursday 5 February 2026 at 2pm in the Salvation Army Hall, Paisley, PA1 1ND. For more details or to interview Ajay Close, please contact PR Advisor, Allana Parker on **M: 07483 820027**
3. Ajay Close is an award winning novelist and journalist. She was a former writer in residence at Renfrewshire and Perth and Kinross.
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 freely sharing 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/>. Details about this nationwide peer-learning for fun movement, with more than 1,000 u3as across the UK, can be found at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>