

**u3a Talk 4 June 2026**  
**Beyond Beliefs: One Family's Incredible Story**  
**Sohail Husain, lecturer**

This talk reveals the amazing journey of the speaker's German Jewish mother and Indian Muslim father following six years of research during which the speaker discovered how his parents and grandparents' lives were impacted by momentous events of the 20th century, most notably the Partition of India and the Holocaust. The speaker's account weaves together personal anecdotes, historic events and remarkable testimony plus the equally fascinating actual story of how he was able to piece together such a rich and detailed chronology. His is an unbelievable tale that spans continents and cultures, exposing the horrific consequences of war and violent extremism and the struggles faced by refugees and immigrants. Furthermore it is also a testament to how love and indomitable human spirit can overcome tragedy and adversity.

The speaker has lived in south Hampshire for almost 50 years but grew up in London, the son of immigrant parents, who scraped a living working the capital's street markets. His unusual multicultural upbringing and the family's early straitened circumstances left a lasting impact that has influenced his view of the world and the course of his life. After reading geography at Nottingham University, he was awarded a PhD in 1976. He subsequently enjoyed a very varied career including 12 years as a university lecturer, 15 years with an NGO creating safer communities and 12 years as an adviser to the UN on its programmes to prevent violence against women and girls. Following retirement, he embarked on research into his family's history that led to many amazing discoveries and ultimately to publication of his acclaimed memoir, 'Beyond Beliefs'. Since then, he has given many talks based on the story to audiences in the UK and abroad.

