

MESSAGE FROM CHRIS NIVEN, CHAIR OF THE NOTTS NETWORK

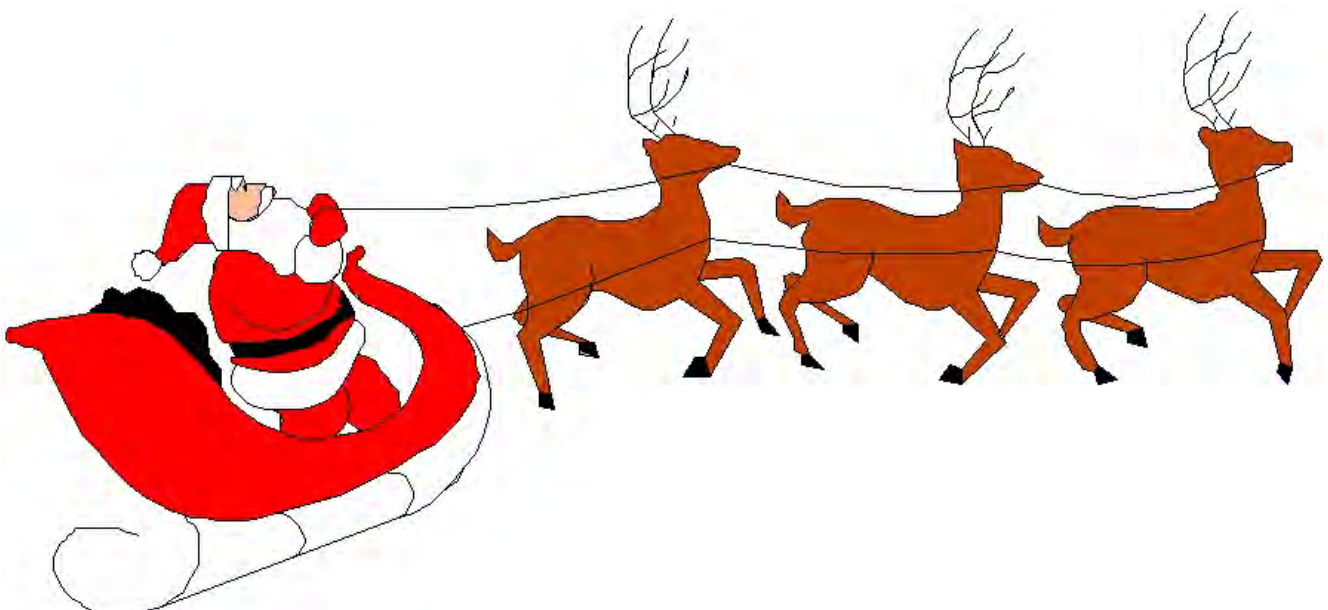
Season's Greetings Everyone,

What a busy time of the year it is and how December is flying by. I have just got back from a few days in London and seeing all the Christmas lights has really got me into the festive spirit.

The turmoil that is going on in the world at the moment really makes me think about not only the value of family and friends but the wider community. Hearing how much money was raised by Comic Relief just goes to show that even in these challenging times what can be achieved to help when we all pull together. So, here is to us, our u3a family and the help and support that we have, and do, give to each other, not just at Christmas but all year round.

Have a wonderful festive season and a happy, healthy 2025.

Best wishes
Chris



MESSAGE FROM THE u3a EAST MIDLANDS SUPPORT TEAM

Council election update – put yourself forward!

There is still time for u3a members to stand as East Midlands Regional Representatives on the new u3a Council. This is a brilliant opportunity for members to step forward, make themselves known, and contribute to the future of the movement.

It's in the hands of our members to make this new venture a success. Please do think about whether you could stand to be the voice of u3a in our Region, helping to steer u3a forward. You can find a pack for the Council roles below, along with details on how to apply.

We know it is challenging to find individuals who may still have the energy, time and skills to perform such a role as a volunteer, but so far, with the application deadline of Thursday 19th December looming, no-one has yet applied from within our Region.

The successful candidates will be able to count on the full support of the East Midlands Support Team who have a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience.

A u3a member prepared to stand for election will need to be nominated by their home u3a, and seconded by another u3a in the Region, which invariably takes time to arrange.

Details about the role and the upcoming election process, as well as the timetable and nomination form are included in the information below.

Deadline for nominations: Thursday 19 December 2024

Download the Council Representative candidate pack here:

<https://u3a.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=656ad5962b370cc9e2731d1ed&id=b4bd9a3121&e=b8c9ed1be7>

Fill out the online nomination form here:

<https://u3a.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=656ad5962b370cc9e2731d1ed&id=4e95c6fce9&e=b8c9ed1be7>

We believe it will be a huge loss to our Region if we are not fully represented at the new Council, so will you please do your utmost to help find a willing and competent volunteer to come forward?

Maria Gabrielczyk

maria.gabrielczyk@u3a.org.uk

u3a East Midlands Region Support Team

EDWALTON GAMSTON & DISTRICT u3a

A group from Edwalton Gamston & District u3a visited Veolia's Recycling Centre at Mansfield on 11 October.



We had a great visit. On arrival we were provided with hot drinks in proper mugs and chocolate biscuits. We did a quiz on recycling. All of us found out that we had a lot to learn about what can and cannot go in the blue recycling bin. Without giving away all of the answers the one that really surprised me was shredded paper. The reason is that this interferes with the machinery. They also asked you not to bag anything that you put in the recycling, but just throw the items into the bin.

We saw two videos: one covering the actual recycling plant, how the items are separated and then put into one-ton bales and sold on. The second showed how the waste in our grey bins is used to provide electricity.

Lesley who was our guide took us into the recycling centre to see the machinery and how it operated. There is however still a need for manual intervention to pick out material that should not be in the recycling process. We all had to wear the traditional Health and Safety Equipment, and were provided with an audio guide so that we could hear Lesley and she did not need to shout.

We got a recycled carrier bag, pen and instructions on how to sort our rubbish correctly to take away.

Our thanks go to Bernie who had organised this superb visit.

Martin Holden
Treasurer

The Time Out Group go Ghost Hunting

Intrepid members of our Time Out group set out on a Ghost Walk around the Castle Quarter of Nottingham, beginning at Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem, one of the most haunted buildings in Nottingham. In its Rock Lounge atop the bar sits a wooden ship, housed within a glass case – the Cursed Galleon, covered by decades of dust and cobwebs. No one will clean the galleon because, it is said, the last three people who have cleaned it died mysterious and unexpected deaths within 12 months.

And so a little more apprehensively, the tour continued, the guide positing that our perceived image of a ghost was what Hollywood and film makers have imagined and that ghosts actually walk among us all the time. He led the group towards the castle where Roger de Mortimer was imprisoned. He had led a revolt against King Edward II then escaped to France where he was joined by his lover, the Queen Consort Isabella. Together, they launched a successful invasion and rebellion, deposing Edward and for three years, Mortimer was de facto ruler of England before being himself overthrown by Edward's eldest son, Edward III. Accused of assuming royal power and other crimes, Mortimer was thrown into a deep cave (Mortimer's Hole, beneath the castle) and eventually hanged, drawn and quartered despite Isabella begging her son for mercy. It is her cries you may hear in Mortimer's Hole.



The tour finished in the caves under the Salutation where BJu3a member Jim Molloy was cast in the role of Roger de Mortimer, a rope placed over his head as the guide explained how he was killed. Thankfully, Jim survived.

No ghosts were seen during the tour, but the camera never lies, does it?
Alan Comerie

DUKERIES u3a

As I write, the nights are drawing in apace, the weather appears to be stuck in 'gloom' mode, and thermostats are being cranked up ready for the onslaught of winter... but, with its usual defiance, Dukeries u3a simply puts a bigger coat on and carries on regardless.

Our Monthly Meetings continue to attract the finest Speakers. In October, Steve LeMottee, Trent Bridge's Heritage Officer, gave us a fascinating presentation on the history of one of this country's foremost sporting venues. Members were so interested in the topic that it is hoped that a u3a visit and tour of Trent Bridge will take place in the near future. November sees the return of David Skillen who will talk to us about one of the key battles in the Wars of the Roses, the 1461 Battle of Towton.

Elsewhere, a number of Members enjoyed a trip to see the model of the Moon in all its spectacular detail – including the Moon Landing sites – in Southwell Minster. After a leisurely lunch, they enjoyed a free Concert of Words and Music on the theme of the Moon.



Southwell Refectory



The Jubilee Ukulele Group – JUG for short! – held a singalong in Ollerton Jubilee Hall and raised a magnificent £703 for our adopted charity, the Notts and Lincs Air Ambulance, and a Macmillan Coffee Morning, hosted by one of our Members, Jenny Jeffries, raised £631 for a most worthwhile cause. Later this month, a Supper & Quiz Night will be held in the Jubilee Hall, whilst on November 28th Members will be manning a second-hand bookstall – with a hamper stuffed full of Christmas goodies as a raffle prize – at the Edwinstowe Christmas Fayre. Look out for us there!

Our 'Group of the Month' is the History Group who continue to go from strength to strength. Dr. Irfan Malik recently gave a talk about Indian soldiers and their contribution to the Allied cause in World War One – a talk inspired by research he had done on his Great Grandfather who, together with 460 others in the same small village, had volunteered to fight in the Great War.

Mike Mounsey

RAINWORTH & DISTRICT u3a

Once again we have seen an increase in membership at Rainworth and District u3a. Quite a few members attended a first aid course which covered 'injuries' being bandaged , how to use a sling and CPR. These skills are always useful to have although we hope we never need to use them.

The Local History group visited Southwell Minster when the Longest Yarn was being displayed. Over 1,000 knitters from across the world have made contributions to the scenes which included 80 from the world's largest amphibious invasion. Of special interest were miniature figures of Piper Millin knitted with wool from the jumper he wore on D Day which was donated by his son. The tapestry is now on tour before arriving in Normandy where it will remain.

Our indoor games and table top activity afternoon continues to be well supported, Christmas Cards being the theme for the card craft group. Dominoes and Kurling continue to be closely contested and are very often won by a small margin.



A Dog Race night was held as one of our fund-raising events, fake money was used for placing bets but real money paid out to the winners! Sadly, our other fund-raising event, a coffee morning with a great tombola stall, had to be cancelled due to snow. We are hoping to re-arrange the event in the New Year.



Dr Tim Grey of East Midlands Immediate Car Scheme charity was one of our recent speakers. He spoke of the scheme that he started in 1980 and they are now a team of 20, all are Doctors who go out to support other medical staff at accidents and hospitals. They are unpaid and rely on donations to carry out their work, it was a really interesting talk.

Colin & Jackie Massey

EASTWOOD & DISTRICT u3a

The showcase event held on October 2nd was a success. There were 18 tables promoting their groups and there was a lot of activity. 119 members and 10 visitors turned up of whom four joined up. The pictures show the wide variety of groups displaying their wares, and Clint and Fred were on hand to ensure that everything ran smoothly. Local History is now starting – the first meeting is Monday, October 14th at 10.30 at Brinsley Committee Centre (Group Contacts – Janet Lander and Julie Matthews). Another new start is the Jewellery Making Group, run by Mel Weston from her house. (dates to be confirmed)



Very many thanks to all the teams that made the day a success including Ray and his gang, refreshments were, as always, very welcome and ran like clockwork, thanks to Linda and her ladies, all the helpers setting up the tables, and the moving teams including Mr & Mrs Garrett, and last but not least the group contacts who promoted their groups.



Anne Steel

ASHFIELD u3a

The Ashwood Centre has been the hub of a lot of activity recently.

Members of the committee took part in a Murder Mystery. Set in Paris in 1924. An elite, diverse group of individuals gathered for a dinner party, arranged by renowned chocolate manufacturer Billy Bonka at The Hotel Paradiso. Billy Bonka was found dead in his room, killed by an exploding Easter Egg. The guests at the dinner party are all suspects who have motives. Who put the bomb in the Egg? Amateur detective Hercule McCue was on hand to assist the investigation to identify the murderer.



A great evening with many of the guests dressing accordingly, enjoying good food, good company and helping to solve the murder. The winner was awarded a giant Lindt chocolate egg, that looked remarkably like a bomb.



Martin Fish, a passionate and highly experienced gardening consultant and media personality came along to talk to a large appreciative audience. He spoke of the trials and

tribulations in transforming his new garden in Lincolnshire. Trees had to either be taken out or brutally pruned. The ground was so poor and stony he had to build raised beds for vegetables at the front of the house rather than traditionally at the back. He gave a slide show which showed the difference he and his wife Jill had made to the garden since moving into the property.



Recently Geoff Tootell and members of his Ukulele Group were invited to provide entertainment at the Ashwood Centre's open day for Dave Redfern's belated 60th birthday with his family and friends. A wide variety of well-known songs were chosen by Dave and it was great to have audience participation. Dave expressed his appreciation to Geoff and his group for making the event so enjoyable.

Josephine Smith
Assistant Treasurer

FOREST TOWN & DISTRICT u3a

Turkey and Tinsel Festive Break in Tenby

Having never been to a Turkey and Tinsel break before I really didn't know what to expect. All I can say is it was fun, very entertaining, the food was very tasty indeed and I don't think the hotel could have done anything more to welcome us. Every member of staff made you feel at home and nothing was any trouble for them.

We arrived Christmas Eve (Monday 4th November) and were treated to a sherry and mince pie reception.

The next day was of course Christmas Day and after a trip to Picton Castle with a guided tour (which I must say is a beautifully maintained house that belonged to the Phillips family) Christmas Dinner was set out beautifully. Santa arrived to give presents to all.

The next day (6th November) was New Year's Eve and, yes, we all sang Auld Lang Syne at 10.30 p.m.!!
Having never visited Tenby before I found it to be a very



charismatic place. As you walked through the 13th century wall and around the streets and harbour you expect smugglers to arrive on the beach in the bay of Carmarthen.

Would I do Turkey and Tinsel again? Well it would have to be good to beat this one.

Kathryn Cope

WOLLATON u3a

Wollaton u3a were invited to display a Christmas tree at Grangewood Methodist Church Christmas Tree Event, on Saturday 30th November 2024. We hold our monthly Coffee Mornings in the main hall here and some of our groups also use their rooms for their meetings.

The event was organised in order to raise funds for a community defibrillator which will be housed on the outside wall of the church hall.

Many of the groups who use the church premises, entered a decorated Christmas tree. This is our tree with our Wollaton u3a topper, designed by Maria, one of our Craft group convenors. The event was well attended by the local community and gave us the opportunity to promote our u3a. The church raised £1600 on the day; a great effort all round.

Sarah Spilsbury



RETFORD u3a

RETFORD u3a SHOWCASES 'LEARN LAUGH LIVE'

Over 140 members attended our amazing show of talent, ingenuity and skill, and what an afternoon of entertainment it was! Introduced by our Chair Pippa Ramsay and compered by Vice-Chair Bryan Gladstone, the afternoon opened with performances by our super professional Recorder group. Forget your childhood experience or recorders, this was wonderful!

Poetry was next, sometimes seen as slightly sober but this was anything but as members brought stories to life, everything from Little Red Riding Hood to something rather more risqué.



In the interval members were able to view remarkable displays of unique and inspiring work by our Sewing and Quilting and Fun with Flowers groups. On screen folk were able to see a huge amount of visual art from both Painting and Watercolour and Photography groups.



Following the break our newly formed Making Music group played and sang songs from the 60s and 70s, inviting all to join in with the chorus lines.



Finally, the Creative Writing group gave us a sense of how they approach their tasks and held everyone's attention with simply enchanting pieces.

This was our first foray into staging a Showcase but from the positive feedback we received we know it was enjoyed and appreciated so it won't be our last!

Pat Lockett
Membership Secretary

ARNOLD u3a

Visit to a Recycling Unit

Our long-planned visit to the Veolia 'Materials Recovery Unit' at Forest Town was a truly fascinating event on Wednesday 20th November. Our half-dozen enjoyed a well-planned interesting explanation of the science and techniques behind collecting, moving, sorting and baling the various recyclable materials that Veolia handle in their vast warehouse.

This explanation included not only what should go where in our bins, but why – and what happens to them at the plant. Metals are quite valuable but must be sorted—mainly aluminium from steel cans. Magnetic steel is easy— with magnets. Non-ferrous metals like valuable aluminium are rotated past a fast-spinning magnetic block in an 'eddy current separator' inducing rapid changes in polarity, causing electric charges that repel the metal into separation. (See Google for 'eddy current separators'). However many soft plastics still require laborious hand-sorting. Paper and card are the largest proportion by far.

Wearing red hard-hats, black radio-receivers and yellow safety jackets, we were ushered from our comfortable classroom up to the top of the sorting warehouse where we watched

the activities. Having heard of odd objects that people expect to be 'recycled', we soon saw a large green hairy rag doll removed from the moving belt, amid laughter all round.

The recycling industry works closely with manufacturers of household goods to design and use more packaging that can be recovered and recycled. But as good as we are, we still lag behind others like Sweden and Norway. We tackled a quiz to see how bright we are and took away an 'approved' shopping bag with home-sorting tips.

A grateful word of thanks to Tina for patiently organising this outing.

Brian Cluff FRAS (or Friend of Recycling And Saving)



HUCKNALL & DISTRICT u3a

Hucknall & District u3a have run a Pickleball Interest Group since 2018. It's very popular and now meets twice weekly at Hucknall Leisure Centre, where we have specific Pickleball court markings. We have well over thirty members, all of whom play on a regular basis. We have recently played two matches, home & away against Magdala TC & would welcome playing with or against members from different u3as, as we are aware that new groups are now getting established. If you are interested in playing matches, competitive or otherwise, against Hucknall's finest then please contact Bob McEwen - bmcewen17@gmail.com

Bob McEwen
Pickleball Group Leader



PARK NOTTINGHAM u3a

Recently fifteen members of the Local History Group visited the John Taylor Bell Foundry in Loughborough. The two enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides showed us all aspects of bell-making; it was not a casting-day so we did not see a bell being made but we were able to go into every section of the factory. We learned how the genius of John Taylor in developing effective methods of casting bells enabled the production of bells which last for many years without cracking. Modern science has shown why his methods work.

There are Taylor bells in over 100 countries. In the UK they include Great Paul in St Paul's Cathedral, Great Peter in York Minster and, of course, our own Little John, the Council House bell.



Most of the work carried out today is repairing existing bells but some new casting still takes place. A new five bell carillon, the Hope Bell, has just been installed in Queen's Park in Loughborough as a tribute to those who lost their lives to Covid, and as a 'thank you' to NHS staff and key workers.



This was an enjoyable visit full of fascinating information, where we were told in detail about each stage of bell-casting and tuning and bell function in use. By the end we had a thorough understanding of the processes involved.

Anne Hardy
Local History Group Convenor

STAPLEFORD & DISTRICT u3a

Stapleford & District u3a celebrated Christmas early with music and a “Fuddle” on 5th December. Christmas themed numbers by the combined talents of the Ukulele Group and members of “Singing for Fun”, launched the event with panache.

Tables, decorated by the Committee and volunteers, captured the festive spirit as an amazing selection of delicious food, generously contributed by the members (with a special section for the gluten-intolerant) served all tastes.



As the last few queue at the buffet, drinks have been served, plans for Christmas dominate the conversations.



Stapleford's combined ukulele players and choir launch the Christmas fuddle

Marion Edwards
Business Secretary

RAVENSHEAD u3a

As we head towards the end of 2024 we can reflect on a very successful year for Ravenshead u3a. This year we have attracted a significant number of new members to join us, with our overall membership now standing at an all-time high of 434, an increase of 38 over this time a year ago. We have committed to being very active within the community, and that has proven to be very productive in raising our u3a profile amongst the village residents.

Our u3a began the build-up to the festive season by taking part in the first ever Christmas Tree Festival at St Peter's Church in Ravenshead, which featured decorated trees from 26 local community groups.

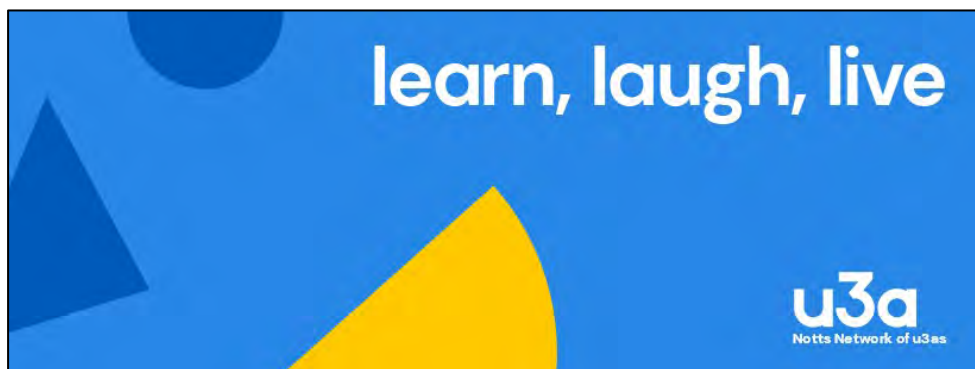
There was one tree representing the whole u3a, one for the Hikers' Group, and one for the Craft Group. The Church was open to the public over the weekend of 6th - 8th December with refreshments available and funds being raised for both the Children's Society & St Peter's Church.

Our Cinema and Theatre Group are very active at this time of the year, and visited the Bonington Theatre to see the musical 'Girls from the North', and also are off to see 'Wicked' and 'Paddington in Peru' before Christmas

Over the course of the year, our Trips Co-ordinator, Halinka Rajchel, has organised 20 individual Day Trips to places of Educational & Historical interest, using the 14-seater mini coaches provided by Ravenshead Community Transport. The last one in 2024 was to the Charnwood Museum and Loughborough Fair.

Further trips have been announced for 2025 to Retford, Jack Straw's House in Worksop, and a larger Mega Trip to Hull, to visit the Wilberforce House and other local museums in the city.

Sue Butler
Meetings Organiser



MANSFIELD u3a

'WE WILL REMEMBER THEM'

Our u3a was represented at the Remembrance Service held on Sunday 10 November at the Mansfield Council Offices, where Graham Headworth laid a wreath which had been handmade by Bill Harrison.

Following the march through the town centre, St Peter and St. Paul's church was full to capacity for the wonderful service conducted by Dr Caroline Philips.

Visit to Veolia Recycling Plant

Six members had a very informative time learning about recycling during the two-hour visit with Lesley Taylor, the Education Officer at Viola.



Jane made six gorgeous arrangements: a wreath, table decorations and a bouquet, which were raffled off to the members.

Members tucked into delicious food provided by the Group Leaders. Speakers are all booked for 2025 and some for 2026. A trip to Barnsdale is taking place on 1 July, with 22 show gardens and a tour by Nick Hamilton. The group meets again in March.



Garden Group

Members welcomed back Jane, from Minster Flowers at Southwell. This time she was accompanied by her son Daniel, who had been at the shop since he was six months old.

Floral gifts were given to Marilyn Dibble and Janet Whitham, Group Leaders. Marie Barrow and Julie Cox for providing the refreshments at every meeting and Marion Walker for running the Plant Stall, with the money made keeping subscriptions low.



Afternoon Quiz at St Philip Neri Church Hall



There was a cracking turnout once again, proving the popularity of these incredible quizzes, run by Jane Sanderson and Jacqueline Harkin. With a very diverse range of subjects with some taxing questions creating a little brain freeze and nothing to do with the heating system.

Captain Philip Tucker and his *Orrible Histories* team put in a sterling performance taking top podium place with 84 points, the *Famous Five* scored 79 and Jack Frost with 78.5.

Bill and Carole Harrison
Publicity Officers

GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLES TO NEWSBITES

We will be particularly pleased to receive articles about any unusual or exceptional event that your u3a may have organised or any new activity that your u3a is running. u3as learn from each other and it is very useful for their members to read about new events or activities that they haven't come across before.

- Please send your text in Word format and keep to a maximum 300-word count.
- Please submit photos as separate attachments in formats JPG, JPEG, PNG or similar (not pdf). They must be of good quality and a minimum of 1MB. No collages please.
- Please ensure that all who feature in your photos have expressed their consent for the photos to appear in Newsbites and also for those photos to be posted on u3a and Network websites.
- Please let me have the name of the author of your article and his/her status e.g. member, group leader, chair etc. I do look on your websites but don't always manage to find a full name or status.

Many thanks
Maria Gabrielczyk – Editor
maria.newsbytes@gmail.com

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSBITES

Please send your articles (keep to a maximum 300-word count)
and good quality photos (as attachments please)
by 7th February 2025 to maria.newsbits@gmail.com



MERRY CHRISTMAS

The text 'MERRY CHRISTMAS' is rendered in a vibrant, multi-colored, bubbly font. Each letter is filled with a different pattern or color, including polka dots, stripes, and solid colors. A small yellow star is positioned above the letter 'I' in 'CHRISTMAS'. The letters have a slight shadow effect, giving them a 3D appearance.