

## **A note on Post-VacStuds blues**

'Evere the latter ende of joye is wo'. When Geoffrey Chaucer wrote this in 1390, I doubt he could have imagined the many young people separated from a togetherness that few have experienced now back at home in an environment utterly normal, yet completely different from what they have in just a few short weeks become accustomed to.

As one of my correspondents writes: 'I feel maladjustment because I was always with my friends when I was at VacStuds and I'm so lonely now.' A parent writes: You may want to have a paragraph or two in the 'Notes for Parents' on how to deal with the youngsters when they come back home. It is not easy.'

The fact is that, even though our young people have known each other only for a few weeks, the experiences they have shared and the intensity of their emotional involvement with each other can telescope time. A day on a VacStuds Course is like a week in the real world. New 'best friends' are made – and lost when the Course ends.

It can feel like a bereavement. I have seen it in my own family, of course.

In our 'always in touch' virtual world, it is easier to keep contact than in the early VacStuds days when letters took ages and phone calls were expensive, but the virtual reality is no longer as adequate as real contact and so a reverse homesickness takes hold.

It lifts eventually, like regular homesickness, but youngsters can be unliveable with while it lasts.

And eleven months is a long time to wait.

I can only apologise...