



Some of the Mums and Their Children at the Hostel

The Close

Our Home's No Prison Say Families

Residents at The Close, a homeless family hostel in Stratton St Margaret are furious about an Evening Advertiser story in which a reader described the unit as like a "prison."

There are worse holiday camps and army barracks they say.

The hostel wardens Martin and Jenny Dinnings are doing a marvellous job.

The row began with a story last Friday about a family who returned to Swindon from New Zealand and could not find anywhere to live. Mrs. Elizabeth Veal, her husband Frederick and six children had been offered rooms at the hostel in Swindon Road but had refused them, saying it was "like a prison."

This has angered The Close families for they claim she did not even have a look round.

"It's a bad reflection on all the families here," said Mrs. Brenda Warne.

"People like Mrs. Veal who don't know the facts, are giving the hostel a terrible name."

Said Mr. Warne: "We're not riff raff or down and outs. All the families here are ordinary people who have hit a patch of bad luck."

Mrs. Christine Williams, her husband Melvin and their four children were living with elderly relatives. When their children became too much for the small house they had to leave.

"We are not criminals and this certainly isn't a prison.

"I think it's marvellous that The Close exists to keep families together during a spell of bad luck.

"I won't hear a word against the hostel - we're all glad that we have this chance to stay together."

Original Article by Iain Pattison from the Evening Advertiser, 1977