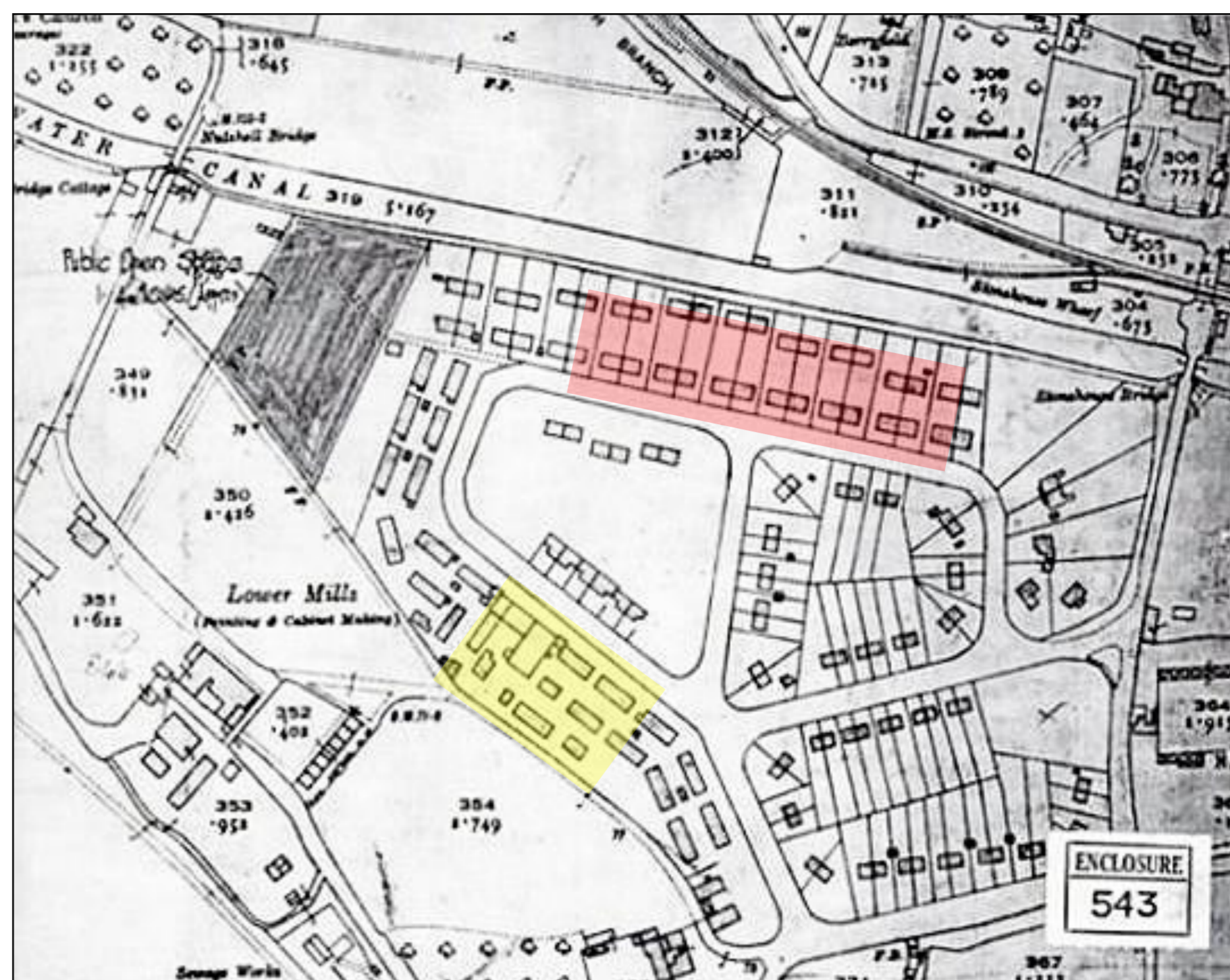


Bridgend Hostel 1940s

Bridgend Hostel

The Hostel was built on green fields along the length of Crescent Road in 1942-1943. It was built by the Ministry of Works to provide living quarters for war workers.

The map shows the Hostel buildings. The area highlighted in yellow is the welfare centre, canteen and staff buildings. The area in pink, next to the Stroudwater Canal, was called the married quarters, but families were housed in all areas.



During the war, the hostel was mainly used for women who were drafted in to work at the shadow factories.



Women on war work at the Hostel.

Winnie Wyman (née Walker) - bottom right in the photo - moved up from Devon and worked as a domestic assistant in the Hostel. She worked from 8am until 5pm looking after the rooms of the women who were out working in the factories. Because of shift work some of the women would be in their rooms sleeping during the day, so Winnie had to work some evenings.

When the war came to an end, some of the young women returned home. Some married local men. Winnie Walker married Ray Wyman and settled in Leonard Stanley.

Looking for work



Tom Shiers in 1945.

After the war Tom Shiers arrived from New Tredegar in Wales seeking work. He found work at Hoffmann's, got married and remained in Stonehouse all his life.

"In 1948, I lost my job in Wales. I was engaged to be married to Peggy, who lived near Stonehouse, so I came to this area looking for work. I got a job at Hoffmann's.

I rented a room at Bridgend Hostel. There were lots of different people who had come here to work; men from Bristol, Cornwall and Wales. There were some German girls who worked at Hoffmann's. Some, like Lottie and Anna, married local men.

When we got married we lived with my wife's family until 1950, when we were fortunate to be allocated a maisonette at the top of Woodcock Lane. Flats were allocated to each factory and I got the last one allocated to Hoffmann's.

We had a 2-bedroom maisonette and the rent and rates together were 11s 4d (59p) per week."

Later the Shiers family moved to Park Estate. Tom now lives in a bungalow not far from his old maisonette.



Tom in 2015