

BRAINTREE YOUTH CENTRE

Like most clubs relying on junior players, BYC's stock has waxed and waned as one generation has moved on to be replaced by the next.

They made their mark as early as 1955 when their A team finished third in division two. But they disbanded shortly afterwards and it wasn't until Roy Franklin got hold of them in the late 60s that they became established.

Based at the Margaret Tabor School, Panfield Lane, they won division two with a team of juniors – Adrian Smart, Mick Rust and Dave Threadgold – then finished fifth and third in division one over the next two seasons.

After that they went their separate ways and Franklin set about finding the next contenders.

The league didn't have to wait long before the next generation emerged as BYC A again won division two in 1975 – and again finished fifth in division one the following season.

And this time they unearthed a gem. Kevin Howard reached the men's singles semi final as a junior in 1976 and four years later he was men's singles champion, overcoming the seemingly unstoppable Terry Dowsett in a memorable final.

By then he was playing for Colne and BYC had again folded, only to be reborn once more. They worked their way up from the lower divisions again as players such as Ashley Mews, John Clark and David and Derek Wiltshire came on the scene. With the help for former men's singles champion Charlie French they rose to fifth in division two by 1982 but then faded and after one season under the pseudonym of Trax, dropped by the wayside once more.

But not before they had produced another batch of players including Kevin Saunders, Mason Byford, Chris Parr and Paul Lombardi, who would go on to grace other clubs in the future.

Apart from a team that finished at the foot of the bottom division in 1989 and 1990, that was the end and a housing estate now graces the area where the club once stood.