

LIBERAL

The Liberal table tennis club was formed in 1977 when the Liberal Club in Coggeshall Road, Braintree, built an extension and its secretary, former men's singles champion Peter Byford, used his influence to ensure the room was big enough for table tennis.

The Cressing club, where Byford was playing at the time, was packing up and the A team of himself plus Harold Bickmore and John Millbank moved en bloc to the new club where they were joined by Dave Atterbury, moving a few yards up Coggeshall Road from Crittall.

They also had a second team that year, including long serving players Ivan Buck and Ken Rogers.

Later when Lake and Elliot folded, Liberal took on their players including the combination of Ray Fairless, Ken Edwards and Derek Finch who like the A team formed an enduring partnership.

The A team, who won the second division on three occasions, all retired together at the end of the 1995 season although Byford subsequently made a brief return.

There was then a fall in the numbers of club members interested in playing table tennis and in the 2004-05 season it was touch and go whether the club would actually have a team in the league. However they managed to soldier on with some outside help and their fortunes took an upturn in 2014 when the Hayden brothers joined and brought the club its first title after 37 years. They won the title again in 2016 and 2017..