

For the first time in its history, the Braintree Table Tennis League has been able to run an over 80s singles.

As part of its individual championships, three of the league's most venerable talents gathered for a special round robin event to mark the milestone.

Ray Fairless, the most recent of the three to pass the 80 mark, came out on top with victories over Harold Jones, 83, and Tony Murray, 81. Jones beat Murray for second place.

The three players are pictured alongside the finalists in the cadets (under 15) singles, Warren Baines, 14, and Oliver Hicks, 12.

League secretary Alan McEwan said: "We think it's wonderful that people can carry on playing the game to such an advanced age. It's a great tribute to their fitness, and their keenness.

"We couldn't resist photographing them alongside the cadets to show that table tennis really is a game for all ages."

Fairless, Jones and Murray have between them more than a century of experience of playing in the Braintree League and they all agreed on one thing: they have no intention of giving up yet.

The picture shows, left to right, Tony Murray, Warren Baines, Harold Jones, Oliver Hicks, Ray Fairless.

In the league, the winners and runners-up of divisions two and three and the final placings for the play-off phase have been settled.

Sible Hedingham grabbed second place behind champions Rayne E in division two after a late run of four unbeaten matches.

After beating Rayne D, their main rivals for the runners-up berth, they needed only a draw against Liberal B to pip Rayne D for second place – and that was what they achieved.

It was an up and down encounter in which no one remained unbeaten and it was only in the final set, Roy Hooper's win over Trevor Laird, that they grabbed the final point they needed.

They take second place on matches won, having finished level on points with Rayne D.

It was almost as close in division three where White Lions A went into their final match needing a 9-1 win to deny Pillar House B not only the runners-up medals but also the chance to play in play-off group two against teams from the lower half of division two.

But their 7-3 win against Black Notley F was not enough. John Breen, playing up from the H team, won once in that match, but it was he who had done much to deny the Lions when he took all three singles in their earlier match against the H team.

Other results: Division 2: Rayne E 8 Nomads 2; Black Notley D 3 Nomads 7; Nomads 3 Rayne E 7; Rayne F 4 Notley D 6 (three for Keith Flowers and Notley's first win since the opening week); Notley C 7 Netts B 3 (three for Luke Tarrant); Nomads 5 Rayne F 5.

Division 3: Notley F 6 Notley G 4 (three for Warren Baines); Notley G 0 White Lions B 10; Rayne H 4 Rayne G 6 (Barry Mouser 3); Notley H 4 Notley F 6 (Mike Pitt 3); White Lions A 9 Notley E 1; Notley H 1 Notley E 9; Notley E 5 Rayne H 5; White Lions B 9 Notley H 1; Notley H 4 White Lions A 6.