

BRITISH RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026

Well, what can I say, we had some great performances in South Wales. Many thanks and well done to everyone who represented AIRE in the British Relay Champs at Margam Country Park near Port Talbot. It was a long way to travel so early in the year for a championship weekend but we were able to turn out 7 teams to tackle terrain which started out extremely sticky and turned rapidly into a complete quagmire. Our teams won 2 gold and 2 silver medals, a tremendous strike rate! Results are as follows:

M50	Julius CaesAIRE	David Alcock Rolf Crook David Bowman	2/10 Silver!
W50	MinAIREva	Joyce Marshall Julia Crook Jo Buckley	5/12
M60	LegionnAIRE	Steve Webb Rob King Ian Marshall	11/23
M/W70	PrAIREtorian Guard	Tony Carlyle Sue Stevens Peter Haines	1/8 Gold!
W18	CleopAIREtra	Bethan Buckley Alethea Carr Katie Buckley	2/5 Silver!
Mixed Ad-Hoc	SpAIREtacus	Lindsey King Helen Alcock Scott Carr	8/29
Junior Ad-Hoc	HerculAIREneum	Charlie Alcock Sebastian Carr Sam Crook	1/10 Gold!

A quick note on the team names. In January archaeologists using ground penetrating radar announced the discovery of a large Roman villa underneath Margam Country Park; the remains are believed to be in good condition given the historical lack of ploughing in that location. This find may be the reason for the event arena being relocated and the courses partly replanned at a very late stage. Anyway, to acknowledge this significant cultural discovery I decided to adopt a Roman theme for our team names on this occasion.

The M/W70 PrAIREtorian Guard team again showed everyone how it should be done. The team was unchanged from last year and ensured AIRE won the trophy for the 4th year in a row. Tony Carlyle and Sue Stevens ran into 2nd place after the first two legs and unleashed Peter Haines who duly took the lead and even had time for a bit of showboating down the finish funnel. Can they extend the run to 5 years on home terrain at Danefield in 2027?

At the other end of the age spectrum a very young (M14, M10, M16) team of Charlie Alcock, Sebastian Carr and Sam Crook running as HerculAIREneum all ran brilliantly to win the Junior Ad Hoc class. Again our final leg runner was sent out in 2nd place and blew the opposition away; Sam was an amazing 3 minutes faster than anyone else on the TD5 leg.

For those two teams it was a clear case of “veni, vidi, vici”!

There was another fantastic British silver medal for Bethan, Alethea and Katie running this time in W18 as CleopAIREtra after they teamed up in Junior Ad-Hoc in 2025. Hopefully that team will again be able to run together in W48- at the JK so the opposition had better watch out.

Our M50 men all ran very similar times at the individual race on the Saturday and I had high hopes for Julius CaesAIRE if they could repeat that consistency against very strong opposition. They put in a great team performance. David Alcock and Rolf Crook were able to send David Bowman out in 2nd place for a really tense final leg. David B was able to overhaul the leader from SOC but the notoriously rapid Nick Barrable of SYO came through to take the win. It was a really well deserved silver medal for the M50s.

As usual I was on the lookout for some strong individual results amid the team races: Sebby and Sam had fastest times on the Junior Ad Hoc on legs 2 and 3 respectively, Bethan had the fastest leg 1 time on W18, Peter had fastest leg 3 time on M/WW70, Jo had fastest leg 3 time on W50 and Rolf had fastest leg 2 time on M50. Well done all.

It wouldn't be a relay championship without last minute juggling of resources to fill gaps that open up in the teams. So my thanks go to Ian Marshall for stepping up to run in the M60 team, to Peter Jones for stepping up as a substitute for Ian, and to Scott Carr for stepping up as a substitute when Peter was injured at the individual race. The screenplay went something like this (with apologies to the Hollywood epic and Monty Python):

“Who's leg 3 SpAIREtacus?”

Ian M: “I'm SpAIREtacus!”

Peter J: “No I'm SpAIREtacus!”

Scott C: “No, I'm SpAIREtacus!”

On behalf of all our competitors thank you to the club for paying the entry fees of the AIRE entrants for the British and JK relays. I'd also like to thank fellow selectors Lindsey King and David Alcock for their input and for Lindsey's online race preparation session.

Steve