

Sian James Spearheads SEAA Masters at Oxford 2017

READING Roadrunners' bid for honours at Saturday's SEAA Masters cross-country championships at Oxford will be spearheaded by one of the true legends of the club.

The evergreen **Sian James** will be the stand-out runner in our ladies' V60 squad. She shows no signs of slowing down in her fourth season in the age category.



Sian started the month as she means to carry on, winning her age category at the Mapledurham 10 by the little matter of 16 minutes. She will now take on the other two races in the My Sporting Times series, the Muddy Welly and the Gut Buster. Then she has big plans for 2018.

They include the club's flagship Bramley 20 race in February, a tilt for a personal best in the London Marathon in April, and then a trip to South Africa for the much-vaunted 89k Comrades Marathon.

She competes with the confidence of earlier this year becoming the first lady Roadrunner to conquer the six world major marathons... in London, New York, Chicago, Boston, Berlin and Tokyo.

And of having, in the last two years, won her age category at the Oxford, Reading and Bristol half marathons and the Birmingham International marathon as well as achieving a top-ten placing in Tokyo.

A new marathon pb would be some achievement. Sian set her current mark, a sensational 3hrs 28:45, in Valencia last year, a time which earned her victory in her age category over an international field and an age grading of more than 86 per cent.

Mentioning age can be a somewhat delicate matter in ladies' circles, and in amateur athletics there is no hiding place.

But Sian says: "I can't believe I'm nearly 64. I don't feel any different to when I was 30 and I think I'm probably quicker than I was then."

If anyone questions her right to be considered the big name in her age group in the Roadrunners team they have only got to look at the club championship marathon standings.

Most of the groups are very close... even the outstanding Matt Richards has a lead of barely two minutes in the highly-competitive senior division.

In the WV60 category however, someone is going to have to quickly source a race and then find an improvement of over TWO HOURS to prevent Sian taking the 2017 title.

In Saturday's SEAA event, she will have the support of Cecilia Csemiczky and Carol Jewell in the WV60 competition.

In the WV50s Jane Davies, Roadrunners' first finisher in last month's BBO cross-country at Prospect Park, lines up alongside June Bilsby and Tracy Jenkins.

Team captain Sam Whalley leads a WV40s squad of Helen Pool, Claire Seymour and Charlie Macklin.

Roadrunners' new England international Mark Worringham will surely start as one of the favourites in the MV40 championship, and he'll have top back-up from Lance Nortcliff and Andrew Smith.

The club have been forced to make a late change in the MV50 section, where cross-country specialist Bill Watson has been called up to replace the unavailable Brian Kirsopp. Bill runs with Gavin Rennie and Pete Jewell.

There is also an injury doubt over team captain for the day Andy Atkinson, so the MV60s will have to rely on Alan Freer, Joe Blair and yours truly.