**NATIONAL ROAD RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS---LIVINGSTON**

Last Sunday, 31st March, saw the 2013 running of the national men’s 6 stage and women’s 4 stage road relay championships. This was the sixteenth year that this race has been run at Livingston and the same time the format of stages for both men (6) and women (4) with alternate 3.15 and 5.8 miles has been in operation. The club had two teams entered in both races but unfortunately late call offs meant that we had one complete team in each men’s and women’s races, (the exception being Lorna Rice who ran strongly in a short stage in 24m.33s) however both were strong and we travelled with confidence. With 70 teams in the men’s race and 43 in the women’s, competition was fierce from the start, and Ross Finlayson just back to competition after a long work dictated lay-off had to dig deep to record 19m20s for the first short lap and a 29th place. However he was finishing fast as he passed on to Barney Phillips who proceeded to run a storming long leg and in returning the fifth fastest time of his lap but also one of the top fifteen of the day (30m56s) brought the team up to 11th and handing on to Ross Matheson. Coming back to his best form, the Queen Margaret’ s University scholar (shortly heading on a two year sports scholarship to the USA) fairly romped round the course in what turned out to be the second best time of the day and the sixth fastest ever recorded (15m09s)to bring the Lasswade squad up to 6th. Martin Gore (32m56s) maintained this position in his long stage run and Ben Mitchell (18m59s) had to give one place in a close fought battle with Edinburgh as did John Murray -34m29s-( on a welcome return to these relays after several years working away) in finishing in 8th. Place from winners Central. In the women’s race Debbie Murray once again racing in the Lasswade colours showed promise of things to come when she raced to 16th place in the first leg in 21m28s passing on to her namesake Nicola Murray (Young) who gained six places in the first long leg in a time of 37m52s. Linden Nicolson (22m40s) gained one more place and the third of the Murray’s (Keira) in a return from injury recorded the 9th fastest time of the day (35m43s) to take the final place to an excellent eigth. In what was a very good performance for Lasswade in prestigious races it was particularly satisfying to see so many athletes returning successfully after absence and the Lasswade jersey prominent in adult distance events. This completes the winter programme and the first track/field league for adults is the Scottish Athletics (Men’s) League division 1 at Kilmarnock on Saturday 20th. April.