Following the pattern set by previous year, this has been an extremely active and productive year, with some very notable successes.

Perhaps the first thing to mention is David Horan’s completion of his PhD on Plato’s important and historically greatly influential, but exceedingly difficult, dialogue, Parmenides. David had his viva voce examination at the end of November, 2013, with no lesser examiners than Professor Mary Margaret McCabe from King’s College London, who’s an authority on the Parmenides, and Professor Peter Simons, the Chair of Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin. They put him to a real test – for up to three hours – and then passed the dissertation ‘as it stands and without corrections’, having, as they said, been duly impressed both by it and David’s oral defence of it at the viva. There are at least two publishable articles in the dissertation, and David has already turned to writing up the one for publication: it is on Plotinus as, as David argues, a careful and insightful exegete of Plato.

The two PhD students that joined us last year, Pauline Sabrier from France and Jun Su from China, have continued not only with impressive progress on their dissertations – Pauline on Plato’s dialogue, Sophist, Jun on Aristotle’s Metaphysics, which together are perhaps the two most important works in Ancient Metaphysics – but also with their generous and admirable involvement in the Centre. Furthermore, they have both achieved significant successes: Jun was awarded the IRC Postgraduate Fellowship; and Pauline a DAAD Fellowship to the Institute for Ancient Philosophy in Munich, in which she is spending the major part of her studies this year.

And this year we’re joined by two new PhD students. First, Colm Shanahan, who’s working on the Symposium – Plato’s dialogue on love – and a testimony of whose love of the topic, and of Plato, is that he’s already published a good and interesting article on it. And, second, Asgeir Johannesson, who’s working on Plato theory of law – he is himself a trained lawyer, Asgeir – and is now concentrating on Plato’s dialogue, Stateman.

Chris Buckels, our Newman Postdoctoral Fellow for this year, has become integral to our daily life and activities, working closely with several of us and especially with Peter Larsen. He finished his PhD at the University of California, Davis, last year: it is on Plato’s dialogue, Timaeus, and also on the interface between Plato’s metaphysics and some central issues in metaphysics today. He is currently working on several articles on
this major topic, one of which he presented to us as a work-in-progress seminar before Christmas – a fine, explorative occasion – and another of which we're looking forward to at the Philosophy Colloquium on Monday 10 February. Recently he published an important paper on Plato's dialogue, Sophist, in the journal Ancient Philosophy.

Our next and incoming Newman Postdoctoral Fellow, whom we are extremely happy to see join us, will be Dr Laura Schluderer, who has just finished her PhD in Cambridge and Plato's dialogue, Philebus.

We've been especially glad to welcome, as this year's visitor, Dr José Baracat, Professor of Greek Language and Literature at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, who is working on Plotinus and not least on a translation of Plotinus into Portuguese. José has been taking a very active part in our activities, and has been of particular help to us in our seminar on Plotinus (see below). We are looking forward to his talk at our Colloquium later this month.

We had several distinguished speakers at our Colloquium: (1) Professor Christopher Shields, from Oxford, who addressed us on Plato's Sophist, and the question whether Forms are necessary for rational discourse (November); (2) Professor Mary Margaret McCabe, who spoke on Plato's Republic, the famous cave simile and in particular the question whether the prisoners in the cave are capable of some form of self-knowledge (November). (3) Professor Giorgos Karamanolis, who gave a most interesting talk on 'The Invention of Value by the Stoics'. (4) Dr Francis Fallon, who was formerly an undergraduate at TCD – and a memorable eccentric one – and has since complete a PhD on the philosophy of biology. He addressed us on the topic of: 'Play and Value in Plato'. (5) Professor Randall Curren, who is relating Plato and the philosophy of education and who spoke on 'A reconstruction of Aristotle's conception of justice and its roots in Plato's Laws'.

For our weekly Seminar before Christmas, we started off in September not, as usual, with Plato, but with Plotinus: his account of memory and immortality. Though this was uncharted territory for most of us, it proved a particularly engaging and stimulating series of seminars, in which we were generally fascinated by the remarkable and often surprising paths of Plotinus' thought on this not so usual combination of topics: memory-and-immortality. In practical terms, it confirmed our decision to ensure that we balance the study of Plato with that of Plotinus.

After Christmas, we turned in our weekly Seminar to a topic that will keep occupying us, at least on and off, for a good while, and that holds out promise of becoming a major project of the Centre: Plato & Scepticism. We got off to a good start, with the reading of Cicero's account of the sceptical period of Plato's Academy, a period that began not so long after the master's death and arguably came to an end with Cicero.
We also enjoyed an insightful presentation by David Horan on Plato’s *Gorgias* 508-9. This is a passage in which, remarkably and perplexingly not to say frustratingly, Plato has Socrates say *both* that he does not know the answer to his fundamental ethical questions (e.g. whether it’s worse to suffer injustice than to commit it) – and this much certainly sounds sceptical – *and* that he is convinced about the right answer (Socrates famously asserts that it’s worse to commit injustice than to suffer it) for reasons of ‘iron and adamant’ force.

In April, Professor Fiona Leigh from King’s College London chaired an excellent Workshop on Plato’s *Sophist*. This was a particularly stimulating event, which also fitted well into the work of several of us, and especially that of Pauline Sabrier and Christ Buckels, who are addressing similar issues in the *Sophist*, but, it is fair to say, with very different approaches and conclusions.

As always at the end of the year, we had our marathon reading-Plato-week, in early June. This year it was on Plato’s *Statesman* and combined wide-ranging and far-seeking discussion with a careful reading of David Horan’s excellent translation of the dialogue. As for the past several years, we were particularly pleased to invite back old friends and colleagues to this event, and not least our previous Newman Fellow, Dr Eleni Kaklamanou, now in a good position in Cyprus.

It is worth reporting that our very substantial library keeps growing: it has now passed the 3000 books mark – thanks also to the dedication of our librarian, John Nugent – and is surely now the largest collection of books devoted to Greek philosophy on this island.

Looking ahead, we are literally over the moon to have with us, for an evening seminar in the Long Room Hub in early November, a large group of Senators, who will engage with John Dillon and David Horan on the topic of ‘Senators as Philosopher Kings’. This wonderful initiative is, really, thanks to Senator Marie Louise O’Donnell, who came to visit us in May and who immediately recognized the potential of the Plato Centre, not only as a research centre of distinction, but as a resource that may just make that difference to the wider society that we so urgently need.

We are just as much looking forward to a very major conference, scheduled for the end of November, 2014, on the topic of: *The Aporetic Tradition in Ancient Philosophy* – an occasion that will also coincide with the ten-year anniversary of the Centre and will form part of our celebrations and commemorations in that context. For this conference we will be joined by at least fourteen scholars for Europe and the US. The immediate aim is to work through, in extended discussion over several days and based on pre-prepared work-in-progress papers, the role that this momentous concept, *aporia* (‘puzzlement’, ‘perplexity’), has occupied in Ancient Philosophy, from Plato, through Aristotle, Scepticism (both Platonic and Pyrrhonian), and up to Plotinus. There is also
the wider aim of putting together a volume, based on these papers, for Cambridge University Press, which CUP has kindly agreed to publish. This volume is to be edited by Professors Karamanolis (more on whom below) and Politis.

In early April, we will, this year, have our MacKenna Lecture, our annual flagship event for the wider public, and we are looking forward with particular enthusiasm to having worldwide leading scholar on Plato and Arabic Philoosphy, Peter Adamson from Munich.

Finally, it is a great relief, and equal pleasure, to report that Professor Politis book, *The Structure of Enquiry in Plato’s Early Dialogues* is now with the press, and will be out, with *Cambridge University Press*, in the spring of 2015

30 September 2014

Vasilis Politis, Director

John Dillon, Director Emeritus

David Horan and Peter Larsen, Members of the Board