



ICCTA Monthly Newsletter

- January 2026

Stay Connected with the Latest
in Sino-Irish Tourism & Culture

ISSUE #2026.01

Dear Friends and Partners,

The first month of 2026 has delivered a "flying start" to Sino-Irish relations on every level.

From the highest tier of diplomacy with **Taoiseach Micheál Martin's historic state visit** to Beijing, to the grassroots energy of **Drogheda's first-ever Spring Festival**, the momentum is undeniable. We are particularly thrilled to report that the **Dublin and Wexford Gala has already sold out**, proving the growing appetite for cultural exchange across the island.

As we transition from the Gregorian New Year toward the Year of the Horse in February, ICCTA is energized by the deepening ties across trade, tourism, and culture.

Here is your briefing for the month ahead.



Strategic Milestone: Taoiseach's Visit & Trip.com Partnership

Earlier this month, Taoiseach Micheál Martin led a historic state visit to China—the first by an Irish leader in 14 years. This high-level engagement has set a positive tone for the year ahead, paving the way for deeper cooperation as we approach Ireland's EU Presidency in late 2026.

A New Chapter for Tourism: A key highlight of the Shanghai leg was the signing of a pivotal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Tourism Ireland and Trip.com Group. This strategic alliance is set to significantly elevate Ireland's profile on one of the world's largest travel platforms, positioning the island as a premier destination for high-value Chinese travelers.



Aviation Update: Direct Shanghai-Dublin Route: During meetings with Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng, enhancing connectivity was a top agenda item. High-level political support was voiced for establishing a direct air link between Shanghai and Dublin to complement the existing Beijing service, a move seen as critical to unlocking the full potential of the Eastern China market.



Trade Opportunities

The Universal Tourism Exhibition (UTE) returns this spring, kicking off a comprehensive multi-city roadshow in Shanghai and Beijing starting March 10th. This streamlined B2B touring exhibition offers a cost-effective way to meet hundreds of vetted Chinese buyers across key regional hubs. If you are interested in joining this roadshow to expand your distribution network, please contact ICCTA for details.

Contact Us



Industry News: Two-Way Tourism at Holiday World Show

This month's fair featured a vibrant exchange of destinations. While the China National Tourist Office promoted the "Nihao China" campaign and visa-free travel to Irish holidaymakers, local Irish tourism boards actively engaged with the Chinese community here in Ireland.

It was a unique display of reciprocal promotion: showcasing the best of



China to Irish travelers, while simultaneously highlighting Ireland's own heritage and staycation gems to our local Chinese residents.



Festival Season: The Year of the Horse Galas

DUBLIN Gala

Date: *Monday, 16th February*

Venue: *National Concert Hall*

WEXFORD Gala

Date: *Wednesday, 18th February*

Venue: *National Opera House*

In partnership with **Wexford County Council**, the troupe travels south for their first-ever Irish performance outside Dublin.



On Stage: What to Expect

- **The 9-Pieced Dragon:** A high-speed acrobatic dragon dance symbolizing the joy of the Jiangnan water towns.
- **The Monkey King:** Witness *Journey to the West's* "Three Triumphs Over the Skeletal Demon," featuring the Monkey King's legendary martial arts battle.



Upcoming Cultural Highlights: Trinity College

Trinity Centre for Asian Studies (TCAS) presents a fascinating exploration of some of Dublin's hidden cultural treasures.

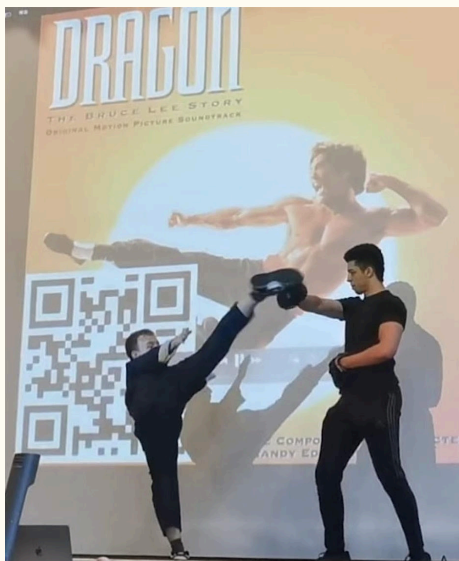
1. The Secrets of St Anne's Chinese Garden

Date: *Thursday, 19 Feb (1:00 PM)*

Venue: *Trinity Long Room Hub*

Dr. Isabella Jackson reveals the history and symbolism behind the Irish-Suzhou Garden hidden in St Anne's Park.

[Book Ticket](#)



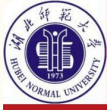
2. The Cultural Power of Kung Fu

Date: *Thursday, 19 Feb (5:00*

PM) Venue: *Synge Theatre, Arts Building*

An evening session with **Joseph Clarke**, exploring how Bruce Lee transformed martial arts into a global symbol of identity and intercultural dialogue. The talk will conclude with a live Jeet Kune Do demonstration.

[Book Ticket](#)



Chinese Culture Forum 2026



THE
LANGUAGE
CENTRE

**Irish Music and Sport in China
- My Professional and Social Life Stories**
爱尔兰音乐和运动

—— 我的在华职业和社交活动二三事

Honourary Professor Seán Cunningham (肖恩)
Hubei Normal University, China

Thursday 19 February 2026
13:00-14:30
The Auditorium, McClay Library



Chinese Cultural Unity
Invite You
中国文化节共荣会邀请您



Drogheda's First Spring Festival Gala

首届华人春节联欢会

Free experience of Asian Culture and food

KungFu, Tea tasting, dumpling making workshop,
Culture performance ...

17 Feb 2026 5-7pm

Barbican Centre, Drogheda
Sponsored By

**HANDS
4 UNITY**



Dolman Insurance Broker

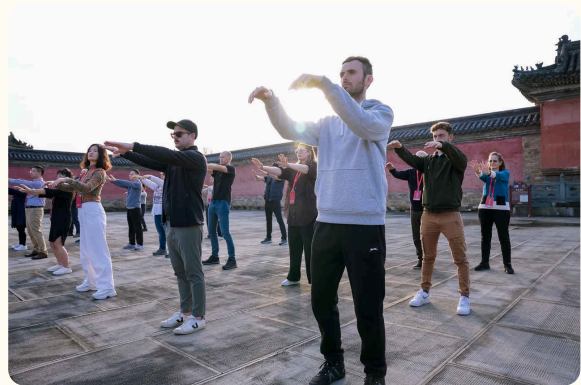


New Opportunities: Digital Marketing & Culture & Tourism Product Innovation

ICCTA is launching a new Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) strategy to drive engagement and create sellable itineraries for the Chinese market. We are

currently seeking **tourism trade partners** to pilot two initiatives:

- **Viral Marketing Campaign (The "Digital Duet"):**We are developing an AR-powered social media challenge (**Xiaohongshu/Douyin**) with ICH theme. With a target of **100 million+ views**, this is a prime opportunity for Irish businesses to gain massive brand visibility among Chinese travelers.
- **New Product Development (The "Living Heritage" Tour):**We are designing a high-yield "Hybrid Heritage" itinerary. This package moves beyond standard sightseeing to offer immersive workshops—from **GAA sports to Taiji masterclasses**.



Call to Action:If you are an Irish culture or tourism businesses interested in being a launch partner for these high-visibility campaigns, please contact us to discuss co-branding opportunities.

Contact Us

For inquiries or additional information, please contact us at info@cits.ie
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