



## *ICCTA Newsletter - April 2026*

New Opportunities in Sino-Irish  
Tourism, Culture and Business

SPRING 2026

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**Dear Members, Friends and Partners,**

**Spring 2026 is bringing fresh momentum to Ireland-China engagement across tourism, culture and business. This update highlights some timely examples of how Irish organisations can build visibility in China through story, participation and partnership.**

**From a landmark football return visit to grassroots Gaelic games in central China and a practical Tourism Ireland industry platform in May, there are clear opportunities this season for Irish partners looking to strengthen their presence in the Chinese market.**

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## Industry Opportunity This Spring

Tourism Ireland's China Sales Blitz will take place in May 2026, with events across Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai, bringing Irish tourism companies together with travel trade buyers.

A number of Irish companies, including ICCTA members, will be participating. During the programme, networking sessions and challenge events will also feature partner-contributed prizes and experiences.

For an overview of the programme and impact, please refer to [last year's Sales Blitz](#).

Support the China Sales Blitz



## Fifty Years On: The 1976 UCD Team Returns to China

This spring, members of the 1976 University College Dublin football squad returned to China, fifty years after becoming the first Western football team to visit the country after 1949.



Their original tour took place at a time when China was only beginning to reopen to the outside world, making the visit not just a sporting milestone, but also a symbolic moment in early Ireland–China engagement.



Their 2026 return visit is more than a reunion. It is a reminder that Ireland–China friendship has real depth, and that sport continues to create powerful people-to-people connections.

Stories like this reflect a shared history that continues to resonate today—quietly strengthening mutual understanding and connection across generations.



## Gaelic Games in Central China

On 25 April 2026, Hubei Harps GAA held a training session and match activity in central China, offering another strong example of Irish culture being shared in China through participation and community.

Gaelic games are not only sport. They are also part of Ireland's traditional sporting heritage, making them a



highly visual and engaging way to introduce Irish identity, values and culture to new audiences.

For tourism, education and cultural partners, this kind of grassroots activity is a useful reminder that promotion in China can begin with memorable local experiences.



## Ireland at Hainan Expo 2026

Irish companies continued their presence at this year's China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) in Hainan, one of the region's leading platforms for premium global brands, bringing together over 3,400 brands from more than 60 countries.



Among the Irish participants, it was particularly encouraging to see smaller, craft-driven producers gaining recognition alongside larger international names. We are delighted



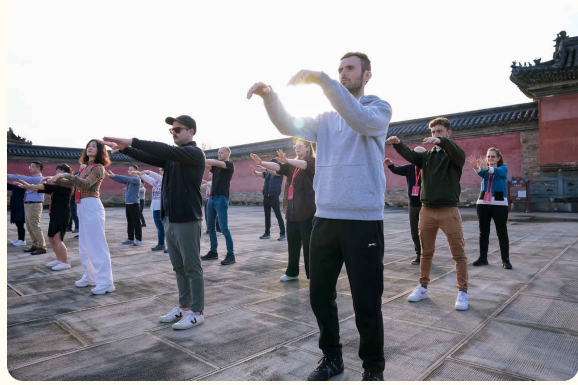
to share that Glen Keen Estate Cream Liqueur recently won the Bronze Award at the Hainan Global Gift Awards, a recognition that speaks not only to product quality, but also a reflection of how authentic Irish products—rooted in place and story—are increasingly resonating with audiences in China.

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## Why This Matters

Across these stories, one theme quietly emerges: meaningful engagement between Ireland and China is built over time—through shared experiences, cultural exchange and personal connection.

From historic visits to present-day participation, these moments continue to shape how Ireland is seen, understood and remembered in China.



ICCTA remains committed to supporting and connecting Irish organisations engaging with China in thoughtful and meaningful ways.

[Contact Us](#)

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