

tír na nòg



GARGOYLE GAMES

48K ZX SPECTRUM



tír na nòg

LOADING TIR NA NOG

1. Type **LOAD ""** and press **ENTER**.

N.B. Do not leave space between quotation marks.

2. Press **PLAY** on the cassette recorder.

3. **TIR NA NOG** will now load automatically.

If loading is not successful, rewind the cassette, adjust the volume and try again.

What is Tir Na Nog

Tir Na Nog is a Gaelic phrase meaning Land of Youth, the Celtic Other World. This game is about the exploits of the great Hero, CUCHULAINN, following his departure from the world of the Living and his entry into Tir Na Nog. His subsequent attempts to locate and re-unite the fragments of the Seal of Calum form the basis of a vast interactive Adventure, set in the magical landscapes of Celtic mythology.

What's on the Screen

The game of Tir Na Nog has been designed and executed as a computer movie. The main character stands 56 pixels tall and is controlled via the keyboard; a total of 64 frames are required for the complete animation of the figure. In addition, the game is populated with a multitude of similarly animated adversaries, all moving and acting independently.

The action is presented as though a camera is aimed at the central figure, who is situated in a complex landscape. The detailed scenery in the

fore- and middle-grounds, and the continuously animated scenes on the horizon, scroll past him as he moves left and right.

The entire world scene may be viewed from all 4 directions. This is achieved by allowing the player to move the position of camera, causing the view to be re-drawn from the new angle.

In addition to walking left and right, the hero can carry up to 4 objects, which he can pick up or drop at will—his current inventory is shown in the status area at the bottom of the screen. He can also 'thrust' with any of these objects when engaging in combat.

Also in the status area is information concerning the present general location in the game-world; a compass showing the current orientation of the camera; any information volunteered by other creatures in the game.

How Tir Na Nog Works

The Option Screen is presented at the start of the game or upon request via the keyboard; the screen offers the following choices:

1. Enter the game.
2. Save the current game.
3. Restore a game.

Note that returning to the option screen from a current game will leave the game-world intact – upon re-entry, nothing will have changed unless a previously saved game has been restored. This allows a game to be saved at a critical point without destroying it. The only way to completely restart the game is to reload it.

When saving or restoring a game, a version number will be asked for – this is to ensure that the right game is restored so keep a note of version numbers; if you are using a Microdrive, you will also be asked for the drive number.

The Keyboard has the following assignments:

The 4 corner keys will cause the man to 'thrust' with one of the objects he is carrying.

Alternate keys on the bottom row will cause the man to walk left and right.

Alternate keys on the second row up will change the camera position 90 degrees left or right.

Alternate keys on the third row up will cause the man to pick up an object or drop a specific object

Keys on the top row allow the player to nominate one of the objects he is carrying, for dropping, thrusting etc. The currently nominated object is indicated by an asterisk.

In addition, there are special function keys:

Pressing symbol shift and 4 will enter auto-run mode until pressed again.

Pressing symbol shift and 5 will freeze the game until pressed again.

Pressing symbol shift and 6 will return to the options screen to allow a game to be saved.

How to play Tir Na Nog

There are many facets to land of Tir Na Nog, and, likewise, the game can be played on many levels, and in many different ways.

Each player will adopt the strategies and attitudes to the game that suit his or her temperament – for, while there is a single overriding goal in Tir Na Nog, the paths to reach that goal may well be infinite.

However, as a guide, we will describe some of the elements involved in Tir Na Nog, and, in the next section, give a few hints on play.

Exploration – The land of Tir Na Nog is vast and complicated, and the paths, scenery and incidental landmarks are continuously mapped by the program. Therefore, the first major objective of the game is simply to find your way about. There are several features in the program to help you do this, (as well as several to hinder you!) but the most invaluable aid will be a pencil and paper...

Interaction – Throughout Tir Na Nog, you will discover a variety of creatures – actually, some of them will discover you! Most of them will not be at all friendly, but some of them can be persuaded, by one means or another, to help you. However, on occasions, it will be impossible to avoid combat, and your effectiveness in this area is governed by a series of combat rules which take into account the qualities of all the objects that are being carried and the object currently selected as a weapon – you will have to work out the rules for yourself.

The Quests – The main objective of Tir Na Nog is to locate and re-unite, (and then activate) the fragments of the Seal of Calum. The difficulty,

however, is not simply in the locating, but in persuading the current owners to give them up! In addition, there are more than a score of secondary quests that will probably need to be completed in order to be in a position to solve the main Quest, plus some rather onerous tasks which other inhabitants may set on you. As you may appreciate, a complete solution may take months, perhaps years...

Generally – As in everyday life, a host of problems must be overcome just to make the smallest of steps forward. So it is in Tir Na Nog as you will discover... many solutions will depend on what is currently being carried or what you have done previously in the game; some solutions will require a good deal of 'lateral' thinking and even, on a few occasions, a little research in your local library!

Some Useful Information On Playing

Penalties – Since the Hero Cuchulainn has already departed the Land of the Living, it is, of

course, impossible to kill him (and, likewise, he has no need to eat)! However, if another creature in the game successfully attacks you or you perform some action which is harmful to yourself, the shade of the Hero will be dissipated (eventually) and will reform at the Gateway to Tir Na Nog – naturally, everything being carried will be dropped. It is as well to remember that, for the same reasons, no creature can actually be killed by you, only deterred and daunted for a little while...

Pathways – Tir Na Nog is a jealous land and dislikes intrusion, even by its own inhabitants. Therefore, all mobile creatures, including you, are confined to the numerous paths and roads that criss-cross Tir Na Nog.

Doorways – So many doors are there in Tir Na Nog, that it has often been called Tir Fosgladach, the Land of Opportunity, because of the number of openings that exist. Doors can lead to caves or tunnels; some doors will instantly transport you to another part of the Land; some are locked and keys are not always obvious; some doors are invisible but that you will see for yourself...

Note that, to walk through a door, it must be on your pathway, so if you pass a likely opening, change the camera position so that the doorway is immediately to your left or right.

Weapons, Treasures and Other Objects –

The location and selection of objects play a major part in Tir Na Nog. Every object in the game (and there are hundreds) has certain attributes – some are more powerful than others, some are apparently worthless but nevertheless indispensable. They can be found in a variety of places – lying in the road, guarded in caves, buried beneath the ground or in the keeping of some other creature. All objects form a part of the combat system but some are well worth getting rid of...

Sidhea-Bruidhin – The Tongue of the Sidhe is the language from which Gaelic eventually developed – it is a mysterious speech, sometimes fey and harsh, sometimes melodic and seductive. Throughout this game, where the Sidhe names are more evocative, they have been used.

Extracts from the *Leabhar Glaothach*, the Book of Tears, being the History of the Seal of Calum and the fall of the Sidhe.

At the end of Time, on the last Day of the Universe, the Great Enemy sat alone and smiled his serpentine smile. Wearing his satisfaction like a crown, he gazed across an Infinite night, watching as each bruised and battered Galaxy flickered like a candle flame and died.

Thus another cycle was brought to a crashing close, another cycle dominated and tortured and fashioned in his own image, another cycle in an unbroken chain of cycles in which his Will had reigned unchallenged – and this, thought the Great Enemy, was Good.

A final distant cluster of sad stars sighed and went out, and the Enemy leaned back on his ebony throne and closed his eyes.

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And from the darkness spoke a voice, saying:
"Master Worm, Thou Art Bound!"

Slowly, then, did the seated figure open his dark, hooded eyes, to see before him a tall and slender man-shape, clutching a bundle in his arms.

"And What" said the Enemy, "Art Thou?"

"We are **Sidhe**. We are the last Guard; We bring thee thy Chains..." and the tall Sidhe thrust the bundle towards the throne.

The Great Enemy gasped as a pain travelled along his spine upwards to his serpents head; a vast, all-encompassing pain that filled his being and he recoiled to press his agony against the back of the seat.

"Show Me" he hissed.

The Sidhe removed an object from the bundle and held it high. It flashed and sparkled like a giant star, forbidding the eyes to look upon it directly.

"Behold, Calum's Seal" said the Sidhe. "Long did he toil fashioning this Thing in places hidden from thee and now his Seal binds Thee..." The Enemy slid down in his throne and curled himself into a tight frozen ball, imprisoned by the brilliance of the Seal.

In the remaining seconds before the birth of the next cycle, the Sidhe spoke his last words to the bound Enemy.

"Know this, Master Worm, while this Seal is intact, Thou art Chained, and know also that

Calum's gift will never be unguarded nor allowed to gather dust in some dark niche nor left to the devices of thy servants, this at the peril of the souls of our race and so do the Sidhe make Oath..."

And so did a new Cycle begin...

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The Sidhe took the Seal of Calum and hid it deep in an ancient fastness, far beyond the ken of Mortal and Immortal alike.

And in a far distant place, the Great Enemy writhed in helpless pain on his black throne, leaving a new Universe to pursue a happier course.

Great were the civilisations that arose in that golden Cycle and great were their works and the Sidhe were cherished by all creatures. But, in time, the vigilance of the Sidhe lessened and the servants of the Enemy crept once again into the green fields and tall towers.

And there came a day when Carnival was in the air and the Sidhe went abroad to look fondly on the celebrations. While their attention was

away from the fortress of the Seal, a thing of the Enemy slid silently inside and seized Calum's gift.

In that moment, the Great Enemy and the Sidhe became aware of this act; the Enemy sent forth all that was left of his Will to render what aid he could to his servant; the Sidhe sprang to their feet and returned with such speed as only they could achieve to their violated fortress.

So they arrived as the thief was approaching the door of the keep and the Sidhe cried aloud in their anger – the thief withered and died in a single, sustained blast from those he had robbed. But, in dying, he wrought more harm than he could have dreamed, for the Seal was also blasted and shattered into four pieces. Thus was the Great Enemy loosed from his timeless bondage upon a Universe unguarded and ripe for Vengeance.

For the Oath of the Sidhe was shattered with the Seal and they took the four pieces through a secret way and withdrew to their first kingdom, which was the Otherworld, the Land of Youth, called **Tir Na Nog**.



In vain, the Sidhe tried to re-forged the Seal, but the art of Calum was lost with its master when he finally passed beyond his Smithy to the Far Land,

even though his hammer and his anvil he left for others to use.

Then, in their shame, the Sidhe were reduced and shrunken to petty, dark creatures and their glory was remembered by few, even amongst their own kind, but rather were they thought to be of the Faery Folk and of little consequence.

The Seal was remembered by even fewer, but, from time to time, a piece would emerge from Otherworld and take its place in Legend; and, over the ages, the fragments were shaped by the legends and became the legends; and this is how the parts of Seal of Calum were known:

The first piece became **Dagda's Cauldron**, which was rumoured to be ever the provider of food.

The second piece was known as the **Spear of Lugh**, which is said to ensure victory.

The third piece became the **Stone of Fal**, which always hit any target at which it was thrown, and later was said to shriek in the presence of a lawful King.

The last piece was known as **Nuada's Sword**, which made its bearer invincible, and allowed no escape to a fleeing enemy.

For the fragments of the Seal were separately named in their re-shaping after the great of the **Tuatha de Danann**, the children of Danu, whom later men called Gods.

And so the Seal, though sundered, retained its power and the power of the Whole was present in the parts, though they could not be united.

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Though the worlds were plunged into torment as the Enemy was freed, so also in the same moment began the Age of Heroes.

The names of the Heroes were many and most drifted into the mists of time with their mortality. Some gave their names to cities and mountains, and will be remembered around the fires of men till Cycle's End.

But the greatest Hero to walk abroad is remembered for the least of his works, for high in honour though his earthly deeds were, his noblest acts were performed in places outside of the knowledge of the Bards and so were unrecorded.

So let it be known that the name of the Greatest Hero was **Cuchulainn**, who was also called the Hound of Heaven, and in Death his deeds were mightier than in Life.

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Many are the tales concerning the Hero Cuchulainn, though many are untrue. Certainly, it is well known that he was at first called Sedanta, but, since, as a boy, he had slain that giant hound that guarded the lands of Culan (with his bare hands, even, and then offering to take its place), he was thereafter called the Hound or Culan's Hound or Cuchulainn (though, in familiarity, he was also called **Cucuc**).

And still, when he was but a youth, did he hear from Cathbhadh the druid that any mortal that took arms on a certain day would be a Hero and renowned forever but fated to be short-lived. And, on such a day, Cuchulainn had broken fifteen sets of weapons in their trying till he received those of the king himself, before departing to join his life as a Hero.

But, alas, the words of the Druid were truth.

For, though he drove back the Connachtmén and was proclaimed Champion by *Cu Roi* the Sorcerer God, and though he received the Secret Signs of *Ogham*, yet, to his grief, he unknowingly killed his own son. And so, at last, on the feast of *Samhain*, at the start of Winter, did all his enemies bring Cuchulainn to his doom. By force of arms and magic, he was grievously wounded. Then did he tie himself to a pillar so that he might die upright as befits a warrior and a Hero. In his final moments, the *Morrighan* and her three sisters appeared as the *Badhbh Chatha*, the Battle Ravens, and landed on his shoulders and thus, in bitterness was Cuchulainn sent from the Land of the Living.

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After his departure, the Hero became as a shade and wandered long on the borders of the Afterworld, for he was unwilling to leave the world of Men, still with all its troubles. So, knowing much of the Lore and History of Cycles, he set upon a last Quest.

And the Quest of Cuchulainn was this – to bring together the fragments of the Seal of Calum and to re-unite them, for the lightening of the burdens of the world and his own lasting glory. So he took himself to Mound of the Sidhe, and standing before the Altar of the Seal, he gazed upon the gateway to Tir Na Nog...

Notes taken from the *Sealltuinn*, which means Observations, being the diary of Edar Mac Eochaid, a Bard of the Sidhe.

The life of a bard is far from an easy one, as I know to my eternal discomfort, but harsh were the fortunes of Ruad, the Red Bard, who wrote part of the *Leabhar Glaodhach* and published the shame of the Sidhe. Driven from the Land, it is said he returned to dwell in the Plain of Lies, and became a lore-master of hidden paths and secret doors.

The *Badbha* or Battle Ravens of Badhelm are the bane of King Dhomnuil and all who dwell in the Castle of the Sidhe. Perhaps the *Badbha* are correct in their claims that Dhomnuil stole Badrig's Feather, shortly after it was removed from the dying warlord and cast in iron...

It is my opinion, for what its worth, that, if the 4 Talismans were spirited from the Land, the Sidhe Lords would feel nothing but relief, since we are forbidden to ever use their Power so they remain mute symbols of the Failure of the Sidhe.

I hear many stories from our folk who live in the central lands, but none are more intriguing than the tales of the **Suil Labhairt**, the Speaking Eye, which dwells in **Cnoc Suil**, and is said to give good advice in return for gifts – I have personally never encountered any Oracle whose advice was in the slightest bit helpful...

The great Henges and Standing Stones in **Tir Clachan** cast mysterious shadows on the history of the Sidhe though they must be home for much that is strange and magical – I would shrink from passing them without all the Words of Power that our Druids could offer.

I was today given a piece of the carapace from a **Tuath da Nathair**, one of the Children of Naithair the Fire Serpent – it is said to possess great power but I dislike its fiery touch.

Far beneath the black peak of **Dubh Sgorr**, lie the catacombs called **An Lin**, the Net. I know little of this dire region except that the Net was wrought to protect the Heart of **Dubh Sgorr**...

The deserted village in the Northern foothills was once inhabited by Sidhe so arrogant that they termed themselves the **Glica na Bhard**, meaning Wiser than the Bards! Their paintings and poetry were quite incomprehensible and, while some obscure works of theirs survived the Great Pestilence, I am glad to say that they themselves did not.

The beautiful, but grim Cern Forest that covers the west of Tir Na Nog is home to a curious branch of our people. I have heard that they clean the forest-floor, or perform any other menial task, for the Great Hunter who dwells in the deep wood, in return for the music played upon his enchanted harp. I have also heard that they know a great secret, which is hidden even from the Hunter.

That dreary bane of our Land, Olcweed, is spreading daily and causing much inconvenience to the poor traveller – and even poorer Bard!

When I was young, Engos, my tutor, told of a wondrous neckband or Torc that, when carried by a person of honour, would allow him to evade

the greatest dangers. Alas, it was broken and lost, and though I searched all morning, I never found it.

I have noticed of late that a particularly noxious breed of cave-wight seems to have crept unnoticed into the Land. Of course, it is easy enough to ward them off, but anyone who has been trapped by one of these wights knows how irritating they are to decent folk...

Acknowledgements

The cover illustration was drawn by S.B. Graphics Limited of Birmingham. It shows a Celtic deity, probably Cernunnos, and is taken from the Gundestrup Cauldron, held in the National Museum, Copenhagen.

The map of Tir Na Nog was specially commissioned and was painted by Charlie Roberts.

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