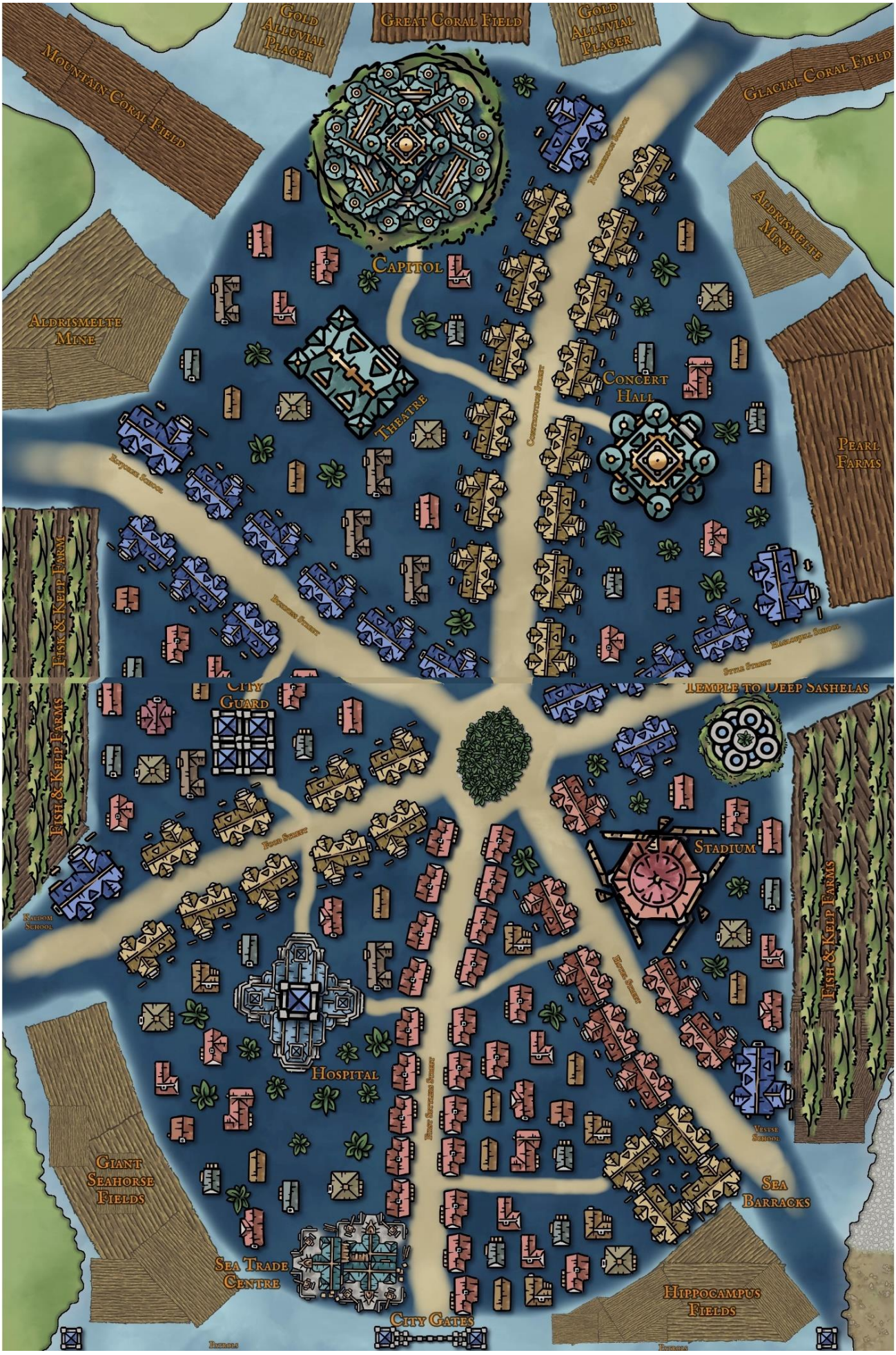
Senkeby

Senkeby City



The City Gates sit on the sill of the Great Fjord, a shallow rise in the bedrock that separates fjord from sea. Therefore, when one passes through them, the height and clarity of the water allow one to look over Senkeby City (although darkvision is needed to see all the way to the Capitol in the North). Soldiers patrol along the ridge of the sill; with it being the shallowest boundary, it is easier to defend as intruders cannot swim overhead without being easily spotted. The patrol use Tridents of Warning to help them scan for underwater threats. Tridents of Serenity are also carried by a couple guards in each patrol for the infrequent visits from hostile Sahuagin. Soldiers sleep and train in the Sea Barracks, that sits near the entrance to Veste, which is home to the land barracks, forge, and armoury, allowing an efficient communication between all of Senkeby's military operations both in and out of the water. Thankfully, conflict is rare, but as the blizzards have failed, altercations with humans are increasing.

The Sea Trade Centre is the first notable building visitors will encounter. Purposely placed here so Merfolk, Tritons, and other Sea Elf tribes need not know more than they need to about Senkeby. However, the Senkebies do have good relations with most neighbouring aquatic nations. They depend on the trade for land-based items that they do not have resources for in Fjordlands, such as clothing materials from Evermeet, but also for resources found in the wider ocean, such as whale blubber, which is very useful for expeditions into the mountains and tundra.

Senkeby City has six major roads stemming from the underwater garden at its heart. The roads are more of a suggestion though; as a submerged city the inhabitants can simply swim over most buildings as the crow flies to get to their destination. However, they are useful for visitors, such as neighbouring wood elves who can wear rock shoes and take a potion of water breathing, as well as carting around heavier resources, and providing some structure to the city's layout. Senkeby does this quite literally:

- First settler's street: contains houses of the oldest Senkebian families. These families were the first to settle in the fjord centuries ago, many of them continue to hold strong to traditional Sea Elf values and prefer to live their lives underwater as much as possible. Their descendants that also stuck to these values can be found to the East of this street and sprinkled throughout Senkeby City.
- More to the East is Hotel Street. Simply named as this is where aquatic visitors can stay in underwater lodgings while they conduct business in the city. "The Bubble Inn" is notable as the one hotel that can cater to land-dwellers with its top floor being aerated in the same manner as the top of the Capitol. It sits next to the Sea Barracks, not only so visitors feel safer, but it is shallower, meaning the air is less pressurised.
- Food Street runs to the South-West and is crammed with restaurants each with their own speciality: local sea food, exotic sea food, Fjordland meats, exotic meats, quick snacks, and plant-based. There is also a culinary school here.
- Opposite this is a short street: Style Street. In the run up to Haglofjell, one can find a hair stylist, a jewellers, an ornament shop, and a regular clothes shop.
- Business Street runs towards Elvjorne and houses a number of different enterprises into the economy, politics, and wellbeing of Senkeby.
- The final street stretching up the Great Fjord is Construction Street. Senkeby is always growing and so new buildings are regularly needed. Additionally, resources such as gold, aldrismelte, and coral are mined underwater and the companies responsible for this can be found along this street, as well as those that help with resource mining and transport on land.

Between these streets are some residential properties of the aforementioned old families, as well as houses for the patrol soldiers, miners, and farmers who tend to the underwater fields surrounding the Senkeby City. The largest fields are kelp and fish farms, which make up the staples of the Senkebian diet. The smaller and slower growing "fields" are those for coral and pearls (although the oysters are occasionally harvested for delicacies too). Both are traded for their high value, although coral is also used in construction for more ornate underwater buildings – the Capitol being the epitome of this. The fields for the giant sea horses and hippocampi are located in the south, and unlike the fish farms, are not bounded by nets to keep the creatures in. Instead the devotion, respect, and close bonds the Senkebies have with these creatures are enough to keep them returning, especially to play with young sea elves. Many are adopted as pets, but remain free to roam the city and the sea beyond. Those that are more strong-willed and give their permission are adopted by the army to be used as mounts and trained for battle. There are a few winged hippocampi, children of the original stud, Pegaseas, who is the pride of the Senkebian army. Miners work on both Aldrismelte mines and gold alluvial placers, although the gold reserves are running low, which has led the Senkebies to start exploring a land mine into Mt. Bridge, from which the alluvial placers in the Great Fjord must have formed.

At the edge of the city, next to the roads into each land province, can be found a school which serves the children of that land province and the surrounding city houses. Initial education occurs underwater as young sea elves are still more suited to the sea than land, and can concentrate and learn better in this environment. It also means at break time, children from all schools can mix and play above the city to help prevent the provinces becoming too cliquey. It is also for safety, as the children are hidden from view underwater, and each school is on the far side of the road from the southern approach to the city. While Veste School is near to it, the Sea Barracks is right next door to help defend it should any attack come from the sea. Education underwater is mainly done verbally, through the language of Aquan that carries clearly underwater, but cured sharkskin and extremely viscous ink are used when writing is needed.

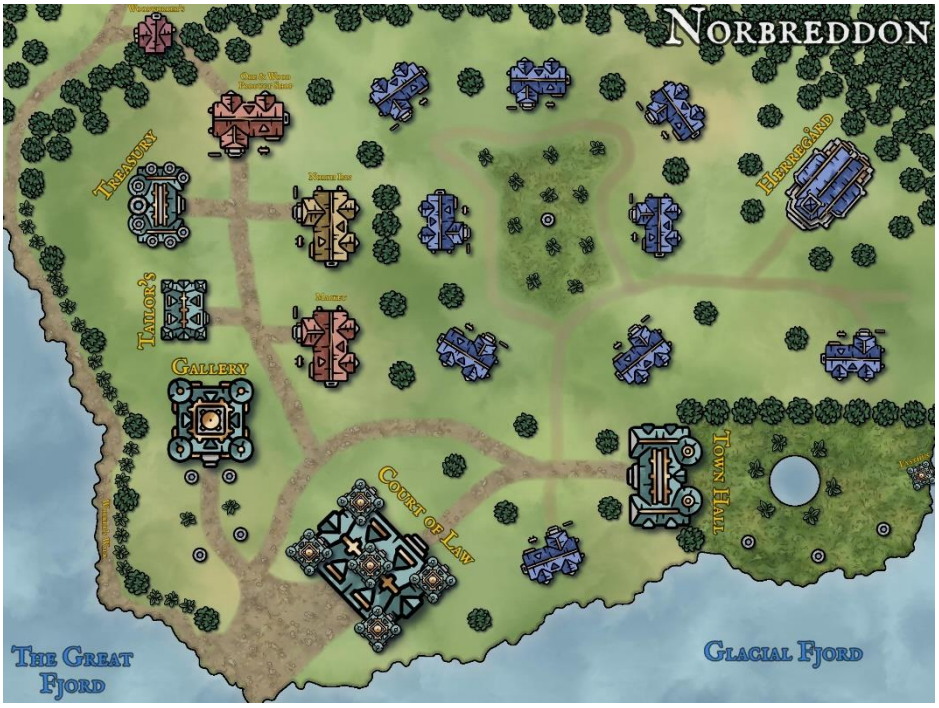
Safety is also ensured within through the City Guard. Thankfully, crime is very low in Senkeby, but as the city has grown, and some inequalities in wealth and resource have become apparent, there are rare moments where disputes break out. However, because of their infrequency, only 12 city guards work at a time – 2 in each province and Senkeby city. However the city guards also work as emergency units and respond to accidents, injuries, and fires on land. When people are hurt, they are the ones to ferry them to the Hospital. Both these buildings are relatively central in Senkeby as a whole, as everyone needs access to them. Additionally, pain and infection are easier to treat underwater where the pressure and constant flow of saltwater provide natural support in the recovery process. To the south of the Hospital is a small medicinal garden, that also has some ornamental flowers that patients can gently swim through when rehabilitating.

The are three main sources of entertainment in the city: plays at the Theatre, gigs at the Concert Hall, and sports at the Stadium. Plays, like most communication underwater are held in Aquan, and are both historical re-enactments of major events from Taylola, Trackless Sea, and Evermeet, and fictional creations from the few playwrights in Senkeby. Music is largely created by percussive and stringed instruments whose vibrations are easier to achieve underwater, but some conch shells seem to be able to function underwater as well. Pet Giant Sea Horses and Hippocampi can sometimes be summoned by specific conch shells that they discovered together with their owners. The most popular sport played by the Senkebies is that of Flyteball. Pufferfish hide is used to create a tough ball that is filled with air. At each end of the pitch are rings at different depths, the lower depths being worth more points, as the lower the Flyteball is taken, the harder it is to control as it tries to resurface with greater force. Points are scored when the ball is placed through a ring. Because of the tendency for the ball to slip out of a player's grasp (or be knocked by a tackling player) and then rise directly up, vertical guarding is a common tactic, as well as the fact that this is the easiest way to "pass" the ball between teammates. If the ball ever reaches the surfaces the foul goes to last player to touch it and the opposing team takes possession from the location of the last touch. Archery and trident throwing contests are also held in the Stadium.

As in most Sea Elf settlements, there is a temple to Deep Sashelas. In Senkeby City, this takes the shape of a giant open scallop shell. It is built from white coral and pink translucent pearled glass walls. As a whole, the Senkebies are less pious than other Sea Elves, perhaps due to their remoteness, but several Delphions manage the temple and have family claims of interactions with the Dolphin Prince. It sits close to the entrance to Haglofjell which houses a chapel that in part operates to serve the temple with processes that are easier on land – such as writing and storing records and making special incenses. On rare occasions, pods of dolphins can be seen playing in the waters above the temple.

The largest building in Senkeby is the Capitol. It reaches from the sea floor to just below the surface at low tide, to still never give away its presence to land-dwellers. It is built from stone and coral, and ornately decorated both inside and out with pearl and gold. Special bioluminescent coral traded up from the tropical seas creates subtle light within, and eelgrass carpets help maintain air pockets in the upper floors through ebullition. Though the air pockets were initially created with the aid of sea Sorcery. Special guests that cannot breathe water are housed in bedrooms here, but other rooms also exist for rare important diplomatic meetings with air-breathers or the imprisonment of these people, as they would not survive in the small City Guard underwater prison. At the very top and centre is the largest air-filled room that is kept for concerts and plays performed in Elvish or using land instruments. Otherwise, the Capitol is a place for networking, where people with similar roles in each province might come together to share strategies, or agree prices for wares across the region. It even has at its centre a room large enough to house almost all the population for the occasions where important messages need to be shared with all the Senkebies. In its entrance foyer, many artefacts and gifts are displayed that have been bestowed to the Senkebies over the ages. One of the most notable of these is the Maktstein, a large golden sphere, bequeathed by the Northern Merfolk.

Norbreddon



Home of the wealthy Senkebian families. Norbreddon is sparsely filled with grand homes and ornate public buildings. The Lord and Lady of Senkeby live in Herregård and are the public faces of those governing the provinces, although they leave most of the decision making to their council who operate in the Court of Law and the Capitol.

The Court of Law is where all rules are decided and written up and stored, and through reference to them, how all disputes are settled.

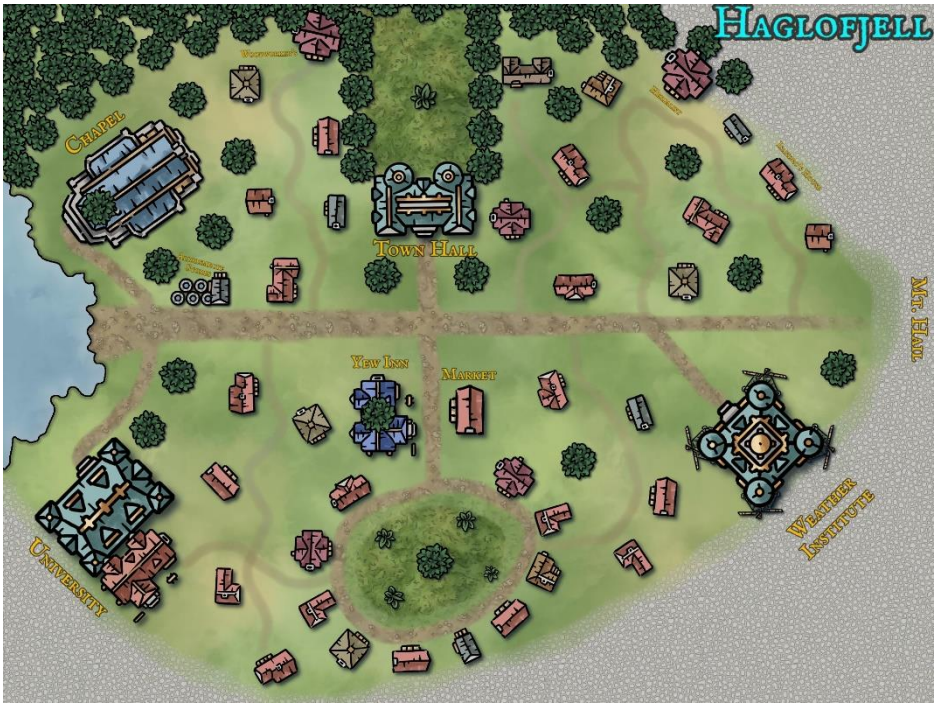
The Treasury is the main "bank" of Senkeby, but also houses their stores of gold as well as some of the Norbreddon families' valuables.

Norbreddon prides itself on the arts. It is home to the Gallery. While some traditional paintings are made and displayed, the more common artform is sculpting, and statues line the path up to the building. Sculpting has a longer history in Sea Elf populations as paintings don't last too long underwater. Additionally, a technique known as advanced glaciation is used by those with Sea Sorcery to create beautiful curving statues. Noting how the glacier carved the fjords with its freeze-thaw effect, those with the ability, have learnt to use Shape Water to mimic the process, albeit much faster, but on a much smaller scale, to make these unique works of art. Sea Sorcery displays themselves are often held at the Norbreddon Town Hall, as it is the only Town Hall with a pond, which is used as the greenery around it provides contrast for effects to be better seen. It is also because an audience is more likely to be found here: unlike the other provinces, the families here often don't have duties to fulfil and so are always looking for entertainment. The other craft Norbreddon houses, is that of fashion. Sea Elves, originally predominantly living underwater, traditionally wear minimal clothing. The Senkebies adopting land much more than other Sea Elf tribes have branched out, especially due to the harsh climates of the Fjordlands. Even their resistance to the cold is put to the test if they venture up the mountains or to the tundra. And so the need of clothes-making was developed. There are places throughout the province that sell the basic items, but of course, the rich of Norbreddon, seeing what other elves wore on land, wanted to be of equal status. And so, the Tailor's was set-up. Rich silks are traded through Merfolk from the elves of Evermeet, and fashioned into elegant robes. A time when other Senkebians don these sort of clothes is for their wedding. All of these take place in the garden of Norbreddon's Town Hall, and the couple make their vows stood upon the Lysthus (Gazebo). Here they are able to look straight up the Glacial Fjord and see a glimpse of the Arm's Glacier at the end, the phenomenon responsible for the creation of their home, the Fjordlands.

Those living on Norbreddon claim to not see themselves as elite, but a notable gap has grown in recent years, and the fact that the "Worker's Walk" has been created and concealed by a line of trees has not helped. This means that those working in the new gold mine, north of Norbreddon, now do not walk through the province, but instead must skirt around its edges. There probably would be more dispute except for the fact logistically separating the work and recreational traffic works well, and the "Worker's Walk" offers spectacular views of the Great Fjord river descending down Mt. Bridge. This route was needed, as funnily enough, no-one living in Norbreddon wanted to be a miner.

This route cuts through the pine forest that surrounds Norbreddon. As well as the new gold mine, workers travel here to farm the trees. The pine trees provide timber to use for the many land-based wooden buildings. As softwood trees, the fibres can also be extracted to make paper pulp, which is then used for documenting laws or at the University in Haglofjell. Pine trees are also valuable for the extraction of rosin and turpentine from under their bark. The rosin is useful for documentation: making inks and sealing wax; healthcare: making "plasters" and ointments; as well as in crafts: oil-painting and metal-joining. The turpentine is the Senkebies solvent, but can be diluted to then be used as a lice treatment and a chest rub to aid breathing – welcomed by amphibious beings that are sometimes spending too much time on land. The pine forest is home to moose, which are hunted on occasion for their meat. Lynx also prowl the forest, but tend to be left alone if encountered by the Sea Elves.

Haglofjell



The province for the exploration of science and magic. And where students often argue they are one and the same.

While the Chapel does cater to the underwater Temple to Deep Sashelas, it is a multifaith centre, and permits anyone to worship any god and seek sanctuary in its walls. Though due to the isolation and obscurity of the Senkebies, land visitors are rare. Nevertheless what little information has been gleamed over the ages on the gods and the magical gifts they can bestow, has been carefully documented and stored. However, the magic it tends to see practised in its walls most frequently is Sea Sorcery. It has close links with the university and both work together to better understand this magic and its applications. Stores of Aldrismelte are kept between the two buildings, as both endeavour to further understand its properties. The Chapel itself is surrounded by yew trees, and was built around a large one, the trunk of which has been hollowed out and carved to function as the altar.

A yew forest is found to the north of Haglofjell. It is home to herds of reindeer, a few are kept as steeds in Veste for the soldiers, and every once in a while a few are hunted for meat. The yew trees themselves have many uses. Firstly, they are poisonous with taxines in the leaves, bark, and seeds being able to induce cardiogenic shock. Senkebian bolts and arrows are often laced with taxines. However, the University has found that carefully distilling the yew bark can uncover taxines in a form and concentration that can treat tumours. The red berries do not contain this product, and instead have been found to relieve headaches, and improve mental focus. They seem to aid spellcasting when ingested. Yew trees have historically been associated with religion and branches are placed on the graves of the recently departed to represent the transcendence of death. For the roots of yew trees are able to resprout entire new trees, and so the yew symbolises both death and rebirth. There seems to be more to this myth, as some rare yew trees throughout Toril, and here in the Fjordlands have magical properties, and staffs and bows fashioned from them can indeed work as enchanted weapons.

The University is always a hive of activity. Housing the only Senkebian library, it is visited by more than just its current students. The most recent success of the university has been their ability to infuse dinoflagellates into other plantlife. These are phytoplankton that glow when agitated. Many Senkebians keep jars of them in their homes to use as lighting when needs be. But now these new glowing underwater plants are being trialled in certain places in Senkeby City. Light is definitely a current focus at the University, as another project has had students dissecting anglerfish bulbs to learn more about their physiology. Students have managed to trigger and amplify their properties chemically, allowing them to essentially create flash grenades, known to the Senkebies as “Angler Bombs”. In more peaceful investigations, the University has been looking at the almost magical qualities of the singing conches, that can be played underwater and heard as if in air. It seems depending on the frequencies produced that different sea creatures can be summoned and soothed by them.

Other than the woodmaker’s and herbalist that sell some of the aforementioned yew products, and the Yew Inn and Market, the final building of interest is the Weather Institute. Many of the University students work here with one overarching goal, to understand why the blizzards of the Himmelsk Halo are failing, and what could be done to bring them back. Although large Aldrismelte crystals are found atop each peak: Mt. Bridge, Mt. Green, and Mt. Hail; Mt. Hail is more frequently studied due to that fact it constantly has a hailstorm raging around its summit. A theory about the predominant south-westerly winds has been proposed, as well as it’s proximity to Arm’s Glacier, but much more research is needed. Those with the Sea Sorcery gift, who then show an affinity for the cold and ice-based spells, often accompany the researchers when they make their expeditions. Not only can they help keep them safe on what can be a treacherous climb, but they learn more about their magic from seeing how ice and snow behave in nature.

Elvjorne



Elvjorne is the province that centres around interaction with the Wood Elves of the Fjordlands.

As the only other communities to be protected (or trapped as some viewed it) by the Himmelsk Halo, it was necessary to forge good relations. The beautifully ornate Wood Elf embassy was built collaboratively, and remains the place where negotiations are held, and where the current Wood Elf ambassador lives.

There is much daily trade between the two tribes. Wood Elves travel down the Mountain Fjord with their goods on boats, that are then parked at a small docks. The docks are small, as the Senkebies do not use boats themselves, preferring to pull rafts of their goods with ropes as they swim underwater, sometimes aided by hippocampi and giant sea horses. Although relations are currently amicable, 2 guarded watch towers remain either side the Wood Elves entrance to Elvjorne, as a precaution. The Elvjorne Trade centre handles all the import and export exchanges, and then the Trade Market sell both Wood and Sea Elven wares to the public. There is also the small Trade Forge where the Wood Elf's have kindly shared their knowledge of smithing and woodcrafting over the years, in return for access to the exotic materials the Senkebies have access to via their sea trade.

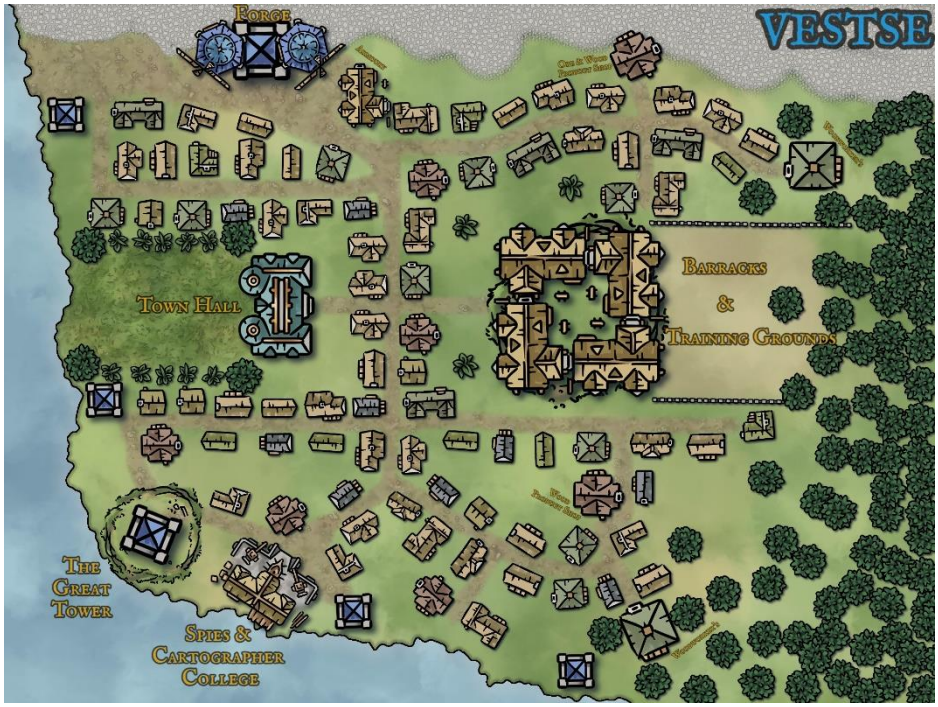
The hustle and bustle of Elvjorne meant it wasn't primarily used as a place of residence. But as the Senkebies have grown, it has become necessary to start building homes here. On the plus side, it has led to the development of the most popular Inn: Sunnyview. Surrounded by water on 3 sides it has a very calming atmosphere, and customers can look due south to the opening of the Great Fjord into the ocean where the sun's reflection on the rippling water creates sparkling glimmers. The banks of Elvjorne are also adorned with drooping woodreed. This is a beautiful ornamental plant with green-purple spikelets, yellow flowers in late summer, followed by brown caryopses. It also has a sweet scent, that can be distilled into a perfume. Again due to fact Senkebies will often be underwater at some point during their days, perfumes are often just made for trade, with the exception of some families in Norbreddon who have the money to constantly reapply, and take pride in their aromatic status.

Kaldom



The residential province – is a kind way of putting it. Kaldom has become packed as Senkeby has grown. As a less desirable area to live, housing is easier to come by for those with less means. Kaldom is often in shade with steep cliffs enclosing it. The houses around the Town Hall were the first to be built, enjoying some morning sun, and close to the base of Mt. Green to be able to harvest the plants there. And so were set up in a more haphazard manor. Once it became clear the remaining area of Kaldom was going to be needed for housing, the Capitol planned a more grid like system. There is not much of note in Kaldom, but the herbalist there has access to certain plants found on Mt. Green. There is Wolf's Bane that can be used to treat nerve and inflammatory pain, as well as an arrow-tip poison in higher concentrations. Fritillaria can be used to treat coughs and reduce respiratory inflammation. May Apple treats fungal and wart ailments. The Southern Wood elves are often encountered when foraging as they share access to the mountain. The mountain itself is home to a few Sea Eagles which can be seen diving for fish at times.

Vestse



The military province. With the Great Tower, 4 other watch towers, a forge, and the land barracks, Vestse is the first line of defence for Senkeby.

The Great Tower is the tallest building in Senkeby and elven soldiers that keep watch on it have always been able to see clearly to edge of the Himmelsk Halo, and now can see across to New Haven to watch their seafaring activities. The intel is then passed to the adjacent Spies & Cartographer College, where it is doucmented. This College trains Senkebies to explore more of Toril's lands and seas and feed back what they learn so maps and profiles can be drawn up of other realms and their inhabitants. With the Himmelsk Halo down, this knowledge is now a priority for the Senkebies who feel much more vulnerable.

At the forge, some land-based weapons are made, the practice of which was learnt at the Trade Forge by Wood Elf tutelage, but it focuses primarily on the traditional Sea Elf arsenal. Tridents and spears are gold-plated to prevent degradation underwater. Longbows are made from yew and kelp to handle the pressure and remain steady when fired in the sea. Silverweave Armour is created from silver coral that is grown netted together in the coral fields, the final shaping and cutting is done here in Veste. It is a skin-tight, flexible armour as strong as chainmail when worn underwater, but will become dry and brittle and break if used on land. Therefore regular armour is also made here for the soldiers manning the watchtowers.

Despite the military focus, Veste is a beautiful place to live as well. It is the Senkebies only Linden Tree Forest. These deciduous trees go through shades of green to yellow to red in the autumn and are a sight to behold. They also have their uses. The wood is suitable for basic shields, but can also be fashioned into flutes, as taught by the neighbouring Wood Elves. The bark itself can be used to make bast fibre, which the Senkebies use for ropes, fishing nets, and climbing gear. Then the flowers, when they are around, can be used as well. Dried, they help make an adhesive for use in wooden architecture, and fresh, they can be used to make Tilleul Tea – a sweet drink that alleviates respiratory illness and is very soothing for Sea Elves who may have spent a little too long on land. Moose can also be found among these trees.

The Surroundings

Northern Wood Elves

Live among a blend of pine and yew trees and must contend with the occasional wolf pack. They are rarely seen given the thick range of mountains between them and the Great Fjord. But occasionally, are encountered scouting on Mt. Bridge, or have made their way to Elvjorne via Valley Bridge, Wood Elf Pass, and the Southern colony.

Southern Wood Elves

Live among another linden tree forest, that is also inhabited by brown bears. While Kaldom is closer as the crow flies, the Forest Fjord and Mountain Fjord confluence makes Elvjorne easier to access. Since the drop of the Himmelsk Halo, there is frequent conflict with the humans of New Haven as to who owns the forest between them.

The Tundra



As you move to the Barren Lands, more arctic foxes and even some polar bears can be seen. Further still, strange deep sounds of an unknown origin have been claimed to have been heard. Closer to Norbreddon, the tundra is sporadically dotted with Frost Flowers, that when ingested can grant temporary cold immunity to beings.