

Norðfjörðr Name Change Proposal

In a recent meeting with the Kingdom and regional officers, it was strongly suggested that the Shire consider a name change in order to alleviate confusion with other local groups and establish a more distinct local identity. To this end several of the Shire's officers worked on developing a potential new name that would embrace the regional identity of Rockland County and allow us to project that identity within the Kingdom and Society.

Name Confusion

There have been several incidents over the last few years wherein the identity of our group has been conflated with another local group. The full Icelandic name (Norðfjörðr) is extremely distinct, but nearly impossible to type or render consistently. The commonly-used "Nordenfjord" has a similar sound to the older group centered around Kingston, Nordenhal, as well as a passing similarity to the group to our immediate east, Northpass.

For a group that has not yet reached full status, this kind of confusion can be crippling. Things we should be credited for may not be properly attributed and these mistakes can be time-consuming to iron out. Here are recent examples of this confusion:

1. Arabella was awarded a Golden Lyre at our group's King and Queens' A&S and Bardic Championships. The award was entered into the Order of Precedence as being awarded in Nordenhal.
2. Our officers were repeatedly contacted for information about Dancing Fox, which is an event hosted in Nordenhal.
3. Arabella was contacted for Gold Key for a Nordenhal event.
4. When we were working on coordinating Jadidja's AOA, the wording of the scroll as presented mentioned her work in Nordenhal, and not Nordenfjord. We were thankfully able to have this corrected before the scroll was given final wording, but the error was read in the official court presentation (we have video of this).
5. A rare example of the reverse of this mistake was on the scroll for Cailleach's Silver Wheel - which while presented in Nordenhal, states on the scroll that it was presented in Nordenfjord.

All of these confluences add up over time to clearly indicate that there is no obvious way to differentiate these groups by name alone. People see the first syllable of the name and follow their natural inclinations. If we are going to be distinct, both in identity and in geographical headspace, we will need to take clear action to achieve this.

Proposed Name

The process to try to pick a potential new name for the group was not without challenges - we wanted to maintain a local identity that was specific to Rockland County as well as to find something that we could call our own. We had several proposals ranging from Latin for “rocky ground” (Terra Saxea), to a German translation of Bear Mountain (Bärenberg) to names building off of geographical features (Palisades Passage, Red Tor, etc). We had a solid proposal with a device based on the *Halve Maen*, the ship of Henry Hudson, but this just missed being acceptably period and the consulting heralds did not advise using it.

Eventually we found inspiration in the iconic stone-clad bridges over the Palisades Parkway. The name would invoke these classic structures and be present in all aspects of group identity - name, device, populace badge.

Proposed Name

The Shire of Stonebridges

The name calls to mind the many stone-clad bridges that cross the Palisades Parkway from Orangeburg to Stony Point. The imagery is so iconic to the area that the local professional baseball team used it for “The Bridge Bar” in their stadium.

The feel of the name is period-appropriate; one could imagine a small village in the west of England that had a few stone bridges over a small river having such a name. The plural version of the name was chosen to distinguish the name from others in the Kingdom as well as to indicate the many bridges that do span the Palisades.

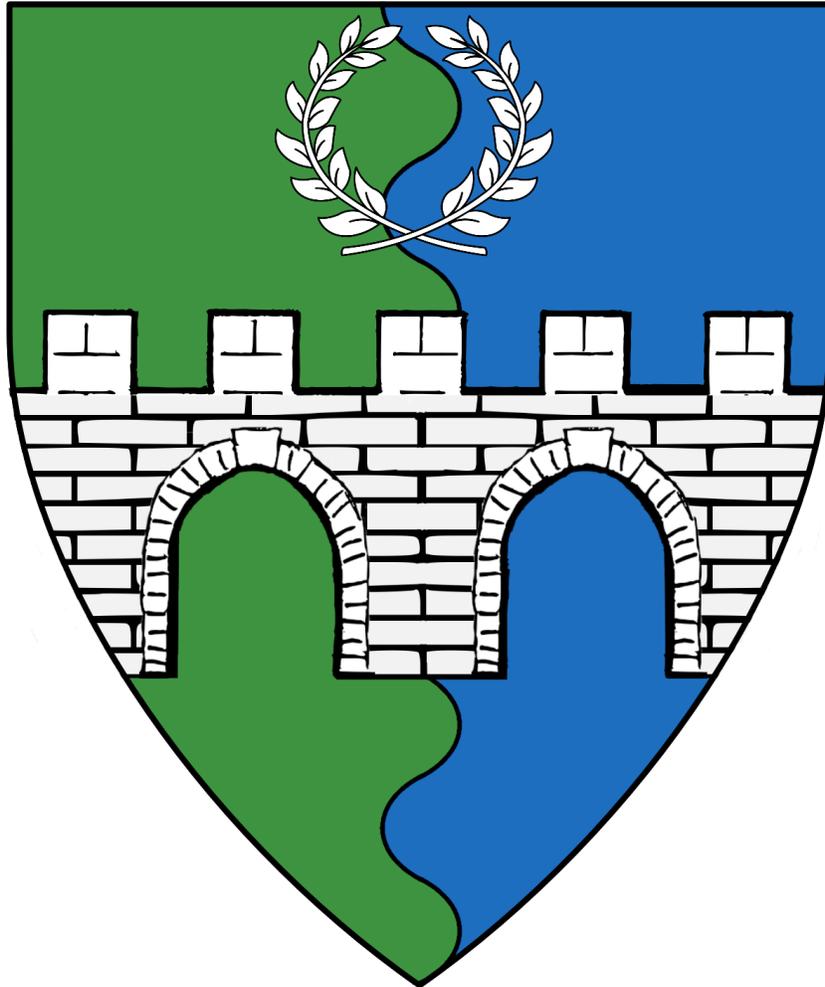
Potential Conflicts

There are two possible groups in the Kingdom that would draw potential name confusion:

1. Barony of the Bridge. This is the group in Rhode Island, centered on Providence. As they are a barony as well as a singular object, this should not present a conflict.
2. Canton of Brokenbridge. This is the Brooklyn group. The name is a singular instance as opposed to plural and is also alliterative, which should minimize confusion with our name.

There is in addition a defunct group that existed in Ansteorra until 2009 named “Stone Bridge” which the Kingdom of Ansteorra maintains the registration for. Written permission to conflict would be needed from their Kingdom Herald’s office if the name is determined to be too much of a conflict. Initial conflict checking by heralds we consulted did not seem to indicate that this would be much of a problem if at all.

Proposed Device



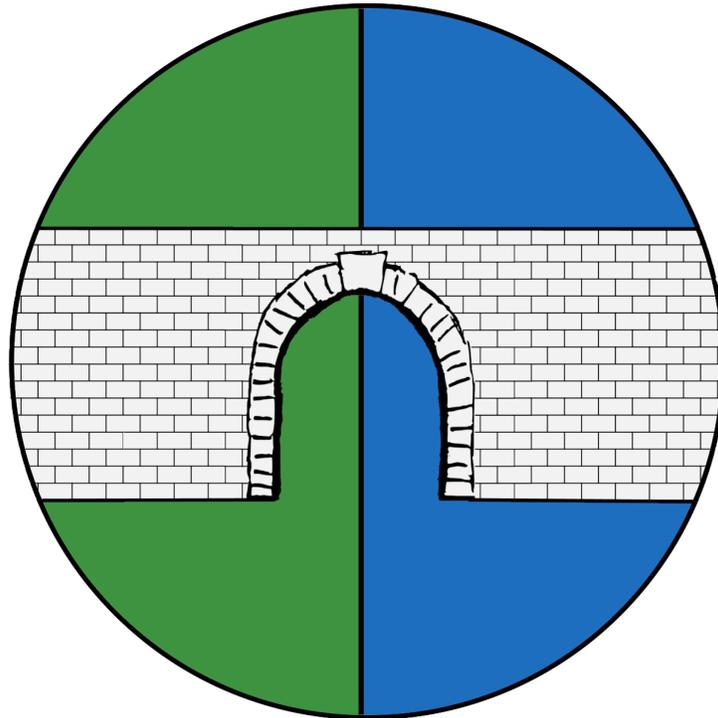
Per pale wavy vert and azure, a bridge of two spans throughout and in chief a laurel wreath argent.

The device uses green and blue to evoke the shores of the Hudson river which creates our natural boundary with Northpass, using the per pale wavy divider just in case people were unclear on the concept of water versus land. A single silver laurel wreath at the top indicates our group status, and the two-arched bridge directly speaks to the iconic bridges from which we drew our inspiration for this entire project.

The decorative archways match the decoration on the bridges themselves, and the battlements were added at the request of the heralds to maintain a period feel.

The look is distinct and should present well at events and in official usage.

Proposed Populace Badge



The actual badge would be drawn with larger brick spacing, but maintains the visual identity of the group and would be a clear indicator of group identity that group members could wear at events.

Possible Additional Identity Elements

We also have the opportunity to secure a distinct name for our Herald office. Other groups have these titles, such as our sponsoring group of Østgarðr (Seahorse Pursuivant). Possibilities would include Archway, Keystone, Fieldstone, or others. Once the office is full, we can explore these possibilities.

Legacy

No one wants to forget or minimize the hard work and devotion that went into the formation and naming of our group. Particularly that of Lord Zachary Wolfhunter, who sadly passed away in 2009 before the group really came into its own. One idea would be to have a memorial thrown weapons tournament at one of our events and award a specific prize to be named in his honor. We can keep our legacy alive while moving forward.