

The Rarest of the Rare

Unique and Very Rare Gold Coins of the
Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek



Pierre H. Nortje



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Contents

Preface	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	9
Chapter 2: Short Overview on the Coinage of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek	11
Chapter 3: The Gold Threepence of 1894	14
Chapter 4: The Gold Sixpence of 1897	21
Chapter 5: The Gold Half-crown of 1892	26
Chapter 6: The Menne Single Shaft Half Pond of 1892	32
Chapter 7: The Proof Half Pond of 1894	69
Chapter 8: The Blank Half Pond of 1900	72
Chapter 9: The Proof-like Burgers Pond of 1874	78
Chapter 10: The “Single 9” overstamp 1898 Pond	81
Chapter 11: The Veld Pond Pattern of 1902	96
Chapter 12: The Blank Veld Pond of 1902	100
Chapter 13: Conclusion	104
Acknowledgements	106
Bibliography and References	108



Preface



Source: NGC.com (also for the front page)

In a list recently published by Wikipedia of the world's most expensive coins, the top twenty are, with the exception of three, all North American coins.

The three exceptions are an Islamic medieval gold Dinar, an ancient Roman gold Aureus of Brutus, and a South African gold coin, the so-called “single 9” overstamped Paul Kruger Pond of 1898. As expected, all the coins in the top 20 list are extremely scarce with the South African example being unique. The value of the individual coins is estimated from US\$4m up to nearly US\$20m.

The “single 9” Kruger Pond, is however not the only unique or extremely rare South African coin dating from that era. The Z.A.R. coinage, although struck over a relatively short period, contains quite a few rarities and in

some cases, coins that over the years have made international numismatic headlines.

In 2020, I published a book entitled *The Scarcity of the Coins of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*.

For my research, I made use of the so-called population reports of the Numismatic Guaranty Company (NGC) and the Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS) that these companies provide regarding the number of coins graded by them and the grades assigned to them. From this one can deduct how scarce a coin is in a certain grade compared to other coins. Up until 2020 when my book was published, the two companies have graded in excess of 25 000 Z.A.R. coins, including over 8 000 gold coins. My book then excluded coins not specifically struck for general circulation like patterns and proofs, as well as so-called blank issues – the latter not numerically certified by the grading companies.

However, to be included in this book, the coins must meet only two requirements: Firstly they must have been struck in gold and secondly they must be unique or nearly so – the rarest of the rare thus. This is the reason why the proof issues of the 1892 gold half pond and pond are excluded, as although they are very scarce, they are certainly not nearly unique with 24 of the former and 17 of the latter having been certified and graded by said companies. The same applies to the rare “double 9” pond of which 25 are certified with 15 being in mint state.

As some pattern and proof coins are discussed in this book, a short explanation of these two numismatic terms are provided.

Wikipedia describes a *pattern coin* as a coin which has not been approved for general release, but produced to evaluate a proposed coin design. They are often struck in different metals and to proof standard. Many coin collectors collect and study pattern coins because of their historical importance and many of the world’s most valuable coins are pattern coins; nearly a quarter of the pieces listed in 100 Greatest US Coins are

pattern coins.

Regarding a *proof coin*: The preparation of a proof striking usually involves the polishing of the dies (punches) that the coins are struck with. Proof coins can usually be distinguished from normal circulation coins by their sharper rims and design, as well as much smoother “fields” – the mirror-like (in the case of proofs) blank areas not part of the coin’s design. Most proof coins are double struck under higher pressure. After being struck, they are separately and individually handled, in contrast to normal coins which are thrown into bins or bags for transportation. Proof coins are produced to be sold as collectors’ or presentation pieces, and are not intended for general circulation.

In July 2021 I published a small booklet entitled *The Menne Single Shaft Paul Kruger Half Pond of 1892 – The story of a mysterious and unique gold coin*.

It tells the story of a unique and historic gold Paul Kruger Half Pond coin which was sold at auction in Johannesburg in 1977 for a then world record price for a South African coin. What made this coin particularly special and unique was the fact that it shows a single shaft ox wagon on the reverse – this coin being the only such example ever recorded. After the sale, the coin was lost in transit, never to appear again.

Following the publication of my 40-page booklet I donated copies to various friends and collectors, including the two Numismatic Societies in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Word soon reached me that a member of the Pietermaritzburg society, Professor Michael Laidlaw, was informed by Carl du Preez, the President of the Natal society based in Durban that the Menne Half Pond had in fact not been lost but that it was actually received in good order by the Durban coin dealer who bought it. Only thereafter was it lost.

After further research, I wrote a follow up on my initial booklet but it was never published in book form. Instead of publishing it, I decided to incorporate it as a chapter in a new book I was contemplating then – a

book on “all” the known unique and very rare gold coins of the Zuid
Afrikaansche Republiek.

This is the result.

Pierre H. Nortje

May 2022



Chapter 1

Introduction

When the author conceived the idea to write this book, only a few of the coins discussed in the following chapters were well known to him. Coins such as the single 9 over-stamped Pond of 1898 and the Menne single shaft Half Pond of 1892 have been previously described in other numismatic publications. Some coins, such as the gold Tickey of 1894, the gold sixpence of 1897 and the gold half-crown of 1892 were more obscure, and the author was not even aware of some of the other coins described in this book.

After consulting with many leading South African numismatists and various sources, some of the coins are still a mystery. In a few cases, pictures of the coins either do not exist or are extremely difficult to access. The current ownership of virtually all the coins are also not known to us. Some of these coins may even be hiding in long forgotten collections waiting to be identified for what they are and enter the coin market again.

The project was not easy with many gaps still to be filled. Hopefully, as was the case with the publication of the booklet on the Menne Half Pond in 2021, when only AFTER its publication new information (and pictures) came to light, the same will happen with some of the coins described in this book.

The reader will notice that the chapters are not in order of the dates the coins were struck in. The author elected to arrange them according to the coin denominations – from the Tickey up to the Pond.

Of the ten coins described, the reason for the production of only two, possibly three, are known e.g. the single 9 Pond that was over stamped to ascertain the correct size for the figures “99” and the Veld Pond pattern of 1902 that was a “test” piece before the striking of the other Ponde followed.

As for the rest of the coins (not the blanks) we do not know why they were originally produced and if all of them were actually struck by the official Mint in Pretoria (or in Berlin or Birmingham). However, there is no evidence that the author is aware of that can prove conclusively that any of the coins mentioned, are fakes or were NOT struck by an official Mint. Most numismatists that have handled these coins in the past, lean towards the belief that they are all genuine specimens.

There are differences of opinion on the number of each of the coins that exist. Some are clearly unique such as the single 9 over-stamped Pond of 1898 while others are only believed to be unique. The Menne Single Shaft Half Pond of 1892 may be one of these coins as there is no proof that it is the only coin of this type that existed. Regarding the other coins that are mentioned, most are believed to have no more than three in existence. It must be pointed out that some of the coins described as proof or proof-like (e.g. the 1894 Half Pond) could in actual fact be mint state coins that were somehow “perfectly” struck only *showing* these proof features.

But again, most numismatists that have handled these coins, are of the opinion that they are indeed not “normal” issues struck for general circulation. The Burgerspond that received a “PL” (and not MS) certification by the PCGS grading company is an example of such a coin.

This is the fun part of the hobby. Readers can make up their own minds regarding the uniqueness, rarity and/or authenticity of the coins based on the information the author assembled and published in this book. Any additional information (and pictures) will be appreciated and will hopefully be published in a follow-up book.



Chapter 2

Short Overview on the Coinage of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

In 1874, the first coin for the Z.A.R. was struck in England by Messrs Heaton & Sons of the Birmingham Mint with the punches supplied by Mr. L.C. Wyon. This was the so-called Burgerspond of which 837 coins were struck consisting of 695 *fine beard* and 142 *coarse beard* issues. These terms indicate the differences in the texture of the beard of President Burgers on the obverse of the coin that was due to different dies used to strike the coins.

For the following 18 years, no other coinage intended for circulation was struck for the Z.A.R. until 1892, when first in Berlin and then at the Pretoria Mint (from late 1892 onwards) a series of coins was produced.

The dated series consisted of the following:–

- The penny dated 1892, 1893, 1894 and 1898 in bronze.
- The threepence, sixpence, shilling, two-shillings and half-crown (all dated 1892 to 1897) in silver.
- The crown (only dated 1892) in silver.
- The half pond (1892 to 1897) and pond (1892 to 1900) in gold.

The gold ponde of 1899 were overstruck with a small “99” on 130 issues of 1898 due to the absence of the 1899 dies manufactured in Berlin that did not reach Pretoria during the Anglo Boer war.



Source: Strauss & Co

The crown (5-Shillings) and pond of 1892 are found in two varieties where the ox wagon on the reverse of the coins, show either a single, or double shaft. (A unique half pond is known that shows a single shaft – see chapter 6). Some proof coins were struck in Berlin in 1892 for all the denominations. These issues are scarce, especially the penny, half pond and pond. In 1898, the mint in Pretoria was closed due to its running at a loss at the time and no coins intended for circulation were struck during that year. Coins bearing the 1898 date were actually struck the following year in 1899 when the mint reopened again. However in 1898 or 1899, 215 unofficial gold Tickeys were struck at a private ceremony at the Pretoria Mint – the so-called Sammy Marks Tickeys. (Samuel Marks was a good friend of President Paul Kruger).

It must however be pointed out that in 1934, Mr. J.T. Becklake, the then deputy Master of the Royal Mint in South Africa, says in his booklet on the coinage of the Z.A.R. that it is a “popular legend” that President Kruger gave his permission to strike these coins. He says that an official record states that Sammy Marks requested the State Secretary for permission to have them struck. The request was verbally authorized but later withdrawn. It was however too late as the pieces were already minted.

During 1900, some blank gold pond pieces, still unfinished in the production process, were removed from the Mint by the Boers due to the

advancing of the English forces towards Pretoria, and were later circulated on small scale in two varieties – the so-called rimmed and rimless blank ponde or “kaalponde” in Afrikaans. Blank Pennies and other very scarce blank Z.A.R. denominations also exist.

In 1902, during the dying days of the Anglo-Boer War, less than 1000 gold “Veld Ponde” were struck in the Eastern Transvaal by a makeshift mint in the veldt as an emergency currency issue for the Boers. These were the last coins ever struck for the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.



Chapter 3

The Gold Threepence of 1894



Source: Werner Lampbrecht

In his *Notes on the Coinage of the South African Republic* (1934: 6) J.T. Becklake, the last Deputy Mint Master of the Royal Mint in Pretoria, and its first Director, notes that Mr. Royle Baldwin, a British Numismatist, was recently offered a gold Tickey of 1894 and a gold half-crown of 1892. A high price was asked for them. He says this Tickey is not to be confused with the Sammy Marks gold Tickey of 1898 and that he is unable to say if either the 1894 Tickey or 1892 half-crown were struck with official dies from the Z.A.R. Mint.

In the same publication, on page 28 & 29, Becklake again refers to these gold coins under the heading *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek – Proof Coins or Medals*.

It is important to note, that although Becklake says that both the gold Tickey and half-crown were offered to Baldwin at a high price, it is not confirmed that he actually bought either of them. He probably did not, because as we will see in the next chapter on the gold sixpence of 1897, when Dr. F.K. Mitchell inspected in 1956 Baldwin's unique South African "gems" that included the gold sixpence, the gold Tickey and half-crown were not mentioned.

In an article written in 1947 by Mr. J.P. Roux (the then Director of the S.A. Mint Museum) for the South African Numismatic Society Magazine, he says that as far as he knows, the coin is the only one in existence and he has not been able to trace any information in regards to the reasons for its minting. He says that it was purchased in June 1939 from Messrs. Spinks, London, through Mr. Oettle, who was then on the staff of the South African Reserve Bank.

Mr. Oettle made some enquiries regarding the provenance of the coin, and received the following write-up from Spink.

"With regard to the gold 'tickey' of 1894, it is undoubtedly the one and only piece as it was originally in the collection of the late Ferrari de la Renotiere. The collection was, as you know, sequestrated, and after a series of vicissitudes the Belgian, Spanish, South African and several other parts of the collection were bought by a French dealer, L. Ciani. After his premature death, owing to a family row, part of the stock was divided between his brother and his sister, who were apparently not on speaking terms, and the South African part, or what remained of it, went to the sister in Rome. The coins then changed hands twice and we finally bought them, so that all the four coins sent you on May 10th came from that collection."

According to the British Museum official website, Louis Ciani was a coin dealer based in Paris from whom the museum bought coins in the past. The firm later continued under the name Pierre Ciani. A French source

states that Louis Ciani was a numismatist who died in 1929 at the age of 35, leaving his business to his brother Pierre.

As stated above, Louis Ciani bought the coin from Ferrari de la Renotiere (also known as Philipp von Ferrary).

According to Wikipedia, Ferrari who died in 1917, had, besides his huge stamp collection, also assembled a large collection of rare coins. His British numismatic collection was sold by Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge in London over five days from 27–31 March 1922.

The title of the sale did not mention Ferrary by name, but read as follows: “*Catalogue of the Famous and Remarkable Collection of British and Colonial Coins, Patterns & Proofs from George III to the Present Day, Formed by a Nobleman, Recently Deceased.*” The catalogue had 710 lots and 15 plates. Other sales of his French and ancient coins were held in Paris.



Source: Wikipedia

Philip Ferrari de La Renotière owned many philatelic and numismatic rarities, including the British Guiana 1c Magenta, probably the world's most famous stamp. It was sold in 2021 for \$8.3 million (R125 000 000.00). The stamp is currently being syndicated by Stanley Gibbons, whereby collectors can buy part ownership (shares) in it.

Matthy Esterhuysen was a well-known South African numismatist who did some extensive research on the Burgerspond. In her book *Ons Gelderfenis* (1980: 35) she refers to the gold Tickey of 1894 in the South African Mint Museum and states that its history is not known.

She however says that there is a **legend** regarding the coin, but it cannot be confirmed, because written proof is lacking. She states that the gold Tickey was, according to Spink & Son, bought from the estate of a French baron. He originally bought the coin from an Italian count whose father visited South Africa in 1894 and was given the coin by President Paul Kruger.

Esterhuysen writes that in the catalogue of the Mint Museum, the provenance of the coin is not recorded and it is only stated that the coin was bought in 1944 for the sum of £4/10/-. (This date differs from the 1939 date that is mentioned by Mr. J.P. Roux in his 1947 article in the South African Numismatic Society Magazine).

Both Mr. Roux and Matthy Esterhuysen refer to Spink's information regarding its previous ownership by a French aristocrat. Spink however, does not mention the Italian provenance that Esterhuysen recalls was part of its "legend" that the coin was given to an Italian count whose father received it as a present from Paul Kruger in 1894.

Although he was born in Paris and grew up and lived in France for most of his life, Ferrari was not a French nobleman, but of Italian blue blood descent, and the son of the Duke and Duchess of Galliera. The "legend" that Esterhuysen recalls was probably a mix up between Ferrari's Italian and French origins.

If however, there is truth in the story that Paul Kruger presented the coin to an Italian, there could be many possibilities as to who this person was. For instance, during the pre-Boer-War years, an Italian aristocrat, Emalia Isaaco Morpugro (born 1837) was the Italian consul general in Pretoria. In 1894 he wrote an article entitled *Les mines du Transvaal et la ville de*

Johannesburg (The Transvaal Mines and the town of Johannesburg).

Although Morpugro was an expert on Transvaal gold production, there is no evidence that Paul Kruger ever presented the 1894 gold Tickey to him. However, what is recorded is that a unique ZAR gold coin was indeed given to another consul general in Pretoria when the famous single 9 Pond was presented to the American consul general, C.E. Macrum. Some sources state – see chapter 10 – that gold ponde were also given to other consulate generals in Pretoria.

This was in any case nothing new, Esterhuysen (1976) reports that in 1874, the Volksraad instructed President Burgers, to donate a coin each of the newly struck gold Burgersponde to heads of foreign powers that had recognized the independence of the Z.A.R.

In his Handbook on *South African Coins & Patterns* (2020:441) Brian Hern records that there are actually two specimens of this coin known, the first housed in the SA Mint Museum, and the second piece in the collection of a well-known collector.

He states that the two coins were compared and no differences were observed – both coins compare to the 1894 silver Tickey in diameter (16.3 mm) thickness (0.9 mm) and weight (2.19 grams). Hern says that he is of the opinion that both coins are genuine pieces:– *“Excellent pedigrees for both coins exist and are similar. The visual comparisons of a silver Threepence and the gold coin are exactly similar leaving no doubt that both were struck with the same dies”*. The coin is catalogued as ZP4 in his book with a picture supplied in black and white.

In terms of Hern’s comparison between the normal (silver) Threepence and gold Threepence, one must point out that although the diameters (16.3 mm) are the same, their mass and thickness differs (1.41 grams vs. 2.19 grams and 1.04 mm vs. 0.9 mm). As a matter of interest: The Sammy Marks Tickey is also 16.3 mm in diameter but weighs 2.61 grams.

In October 2011, a notice was published on the BidorBuy coin forum that

the South African coin collector, Billy Hills had passed away and that he possessed one of the finest collections of South African coins and patterns. In his collection were many extremely rare coins including the 1894 ZAR gold Tickey. The coin was graded and certified by the NGC in America, and later sold by Johan Gouws, a numismatist from Pretoria for an undisclosed sum.

According to Johan, the coin was twice submitted to NGC for certification. The first time it received a grade of “AU (almost uncirculated) details improperly cleaned”. The second time it did not receive a grade but was only certified as “genuine”. However, after he sold the coin, it was sent to NGC for a third time and received a grade of MS 61.



Source: NGC.com



Source: Johan Gouws

The above picture was taken by Johan Gouws of the specimen in the SA Mint Museum. It shows definitive signs of cleaning hairlines.

There is a strong possibility that a third piece exists. An article was written on 26 November 1986 for presentation to the Transvaal Numismatic Society by an unknown member entitled “The 1894 Gold Tickey”. The writer states that he has a specimen in his possession that caused quite a furore then when it surfaced in Johannesburg a few years ago.

Although the coin could have been the same one that was graded by NGC that Hern describes as having the same characteristics as the specimen in the mint museum, the writer specifically states that his one has a different mass, thickness and specific gravity to the museum coin.

So where does this lead us. Is the coin in the possession of the Mint genuine? Is it, to put it nicely, an unofficial strike or is it a forgery? Is the coin really unique? It certainly isn't the only one. I can say this with authority because I have one right here in my pocket. This coin caused quite a furore a few years ago when it surfaced here in Johannesburg. There are those who immediately said it is a forgery, because it has a different mass, thickness and specific gravity to the Mint coin, but who is to say what the mass and specific gravity should have been? Both coins are far lighter than the official Sammy Marks tickey. In any event, both were minted a few years before the Sammy Marks tickey.

Source: François Malan



Chapter 4

The Gold Sixpence of 1897



Source: Heritage Auctions

Both Levine (C6) and Hern (ZP8) record this coin with its edge coarse reeded, diameter 19.3 mm, mass 4.91 grams and thickness 1.14mm. The normal silver issue also shows a reeded edge with a diameter of 19.35 mm, a mass of 2.82 grams and a thickness of 1.32 mm.

It should be pointed out that where the normal silver Sixpence weighs exactly twice (100% more) than the silver Threepence, the difference between the weight of the gold Threepence (see previous chapter) and this gold Sixpence is considerably more (120%).

In the South African Numismatic Society Newsletter of February 1957 (Vol. 5. No.2) Dr. F.K. Mitchell reports that in 1956 he went on a trip to England and Europe and visited many numismatic firms and collectors. He said he was privileged to see one small packet of coins which formed

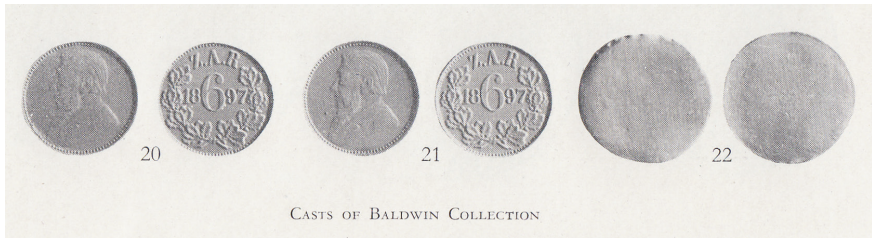
part of the private collection of Mr. Royale Baldwin. One of the coins was a ZAR Sixpence of 1897 struck in gold. He describes it as: “*Brilliant Proof Pattern. The head on the obverse is slightly different from the normal and on the reverse the figure “6” and the date are larger*”.

Dr. Mitchell then mentions that the coin was previously in the Ferrari and Vigil Brand collections. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the gold threepence of 1894 was also once in the Ferrari collection.

The other owner, Vigil Brand, was a rich American businessman, a beer baron, who was born in 1862 and started collecting coins in 1879. According to coinworld.com, when he died in 1926, his collection consisted of over 350 000 coins of all descriptions, and was so large that it was only finally appraised by his two brothers in 1934. It is known that at least some of the coins were sold off from the 1940s onwards.

The Numismatic Guaranty Company (NGC) posted a notice on 5 May 2006 that the Royle Baldwin Collection is to be slabbed. They noted that Included in the collection was an 1897 sixpence struck in gold which Alec Kaplan’s reference work *The Coins of South Africa* describes as “*Listed by Gordon...recorded as being in the Baldwin Collection and probably unique*”. The author have studied numerous editions of Alec Kaplan’s *The Coins of South Africa* but could not find any such a reference. However, he did eventually find the reference by S. Gordon on page 62 of *Africana Notes and News* (June 1960, Vol. 14 No. 2). The article is entitled *Notes on the South African Patterns in the collection of W.V. Royle Baldwin, ESQ., of West Worthing, Sussex*.

The gold Sixpence of 1894 is numbered 21 and described as a “*Pattern*” and “*Believed Unique*”. A plaster cast of the coin is shown in the article. The coin on the left of the following picture is a copper sixpence of the same year and the coin on the right the flan (planchette) of the blank Veld Pond of 1902 – see chapter 12. (A cast of a copper half-crown of 1892 is also shown in the article but not in the picture opposite).



Source: S. Gordon

It is not known when Baldwin acquired the gold sixpence, but in 1934, when Becklake wrote about the patterns and oddities in his South African collection, it is not mentioned.

In November 2014, Coinweek.com (USA) reported that a unique South African gold sixpence of 1897 is to be offered on auction by Heritage in New York. The coin is described as a *Republic gold Proof Pattern 6 Pence 1897 PR 63 Cameo NGC*.



Source: Heritage Auctions

It is noticeable from the picture above that the coin has a “coin alignment” – the obverse being upside down to the obverse vs. the normal “medal alignment” of the Kruger coin series where the obverses and reverses are aligned the same way.

Heritage stated in their auction catalogue:–

“A monumental offering of this legendary South African issue, entirely unique in its existence, and off the market for many decades. Tracing its provenance back to the 1930s, this piece once existed in the Royle Baldwin Collection. Royle Baldwin, a member of the Baldwin numismatic family, assembled a matchless cabinet of many of the rarest and earliest trial pieces of South Africa. In this collection, the coins sat for approximately 70 years until certified by NGC in 2006. Tightly held over the interim, this offering will be the first time in history that this piece has crossed the block at public auction.

Though its uniqueness is in many respects its most desirable attribute, this quality is most-certainly compounded by the outstanding beauty! Immediately identifiable as a carefully produced Proof striking, the fields retain high reflectivity. Pleasing cameo contrast is also on display, setting the raised devices starkly against the flat fields. Die polish blends with light handling to help define the grade, with a tiny mark in front of Kruger’s mouth serving as an important identification marker. A true and unqualified “national treasure”.

Heritage.com reports that the gold Sixpence sold for the amount of \$329,000.00 including the buyer’s premium (approximately R5 000 000 at the current exchange rate). At the same auction on 5 January 2015, a copper sixpence, also dated 1897, was offered with a reserve price of \$150 000 but did not sell (PaulFraserCollectables.com reports that the coin sold for \$176 500 but their source is not known to us).

This is without doubt, the same coin of which a plaster cast is shown with casts of the gold sixpence and blank Veld Pond on a previous page

that were in the Baldwin collection. Like the gold sixpence, the copper issue of the same year also has a “coin alignment“ vs. the normal “medal alignment” of the Kruger coin series.



Source: Heritage Auctions



Chapter 5

The Gold Half-crown of 1892

As we have seen in chapter 3 on the gold Tickey of 1894, J.T. Becklake notes that Mr. Royle Baldwin, a British Numismatist, was offered both a gold Tickey of 1894 and a gold half-crown of 1892 in the early 1930's. A high figure was asked for these two pieces and Baldwin apparently turned the offer down as no record exists that he ever owned either of the two coins.

In his article on South African coin patterns by S. Gordon in 1960 (see previous chapter), he mentions that he has seen a Z.A.R. half-crown struck in gold with official dies, but does not mention whom the coin belonged to at the time.

Becklake (1934) however states that he cannot say if the gold half-crown was indeed struck with official dies – he writes *“It is clear, however, after careful inquiry, that this half-crown of 1892 is not the identical 2½-shillings gold piece which was struck with a plain reverse in 1895 as a commemorating medal, nor is the 1894 gold Tickey referred to (by Becklake) one of the series made for Mr. Samuel Marks in 1898. The two gold pieces in question (2½-shillings and Threepence) bear the full Kruger coin designs, but whether they were actually struck with official dies of the Z.A.R. Mint I am unable to state”*.

The *“2½-shillings gold piece which was struck with a plain reverse in 1895 as a commemorating medal”* that Becklake refers to is a unique medal that was identical to the silver medals commemorating the opening of the Delgoa Railway line between Lourenço Marques in Mozambique and Pretoria in

1895. (This silver medal, shown below, of which two varieties are known, is catalogued as Hern number 20 and Laidlaw number 0207 and the obverse dies in both cases were the same as those for the silver half-crowns of the ZAR – these medals are not particularly scarce).



Source: southafricanmedals.com

The half-crown size gold medal, with a plain reverse, is reported by Anna H. Smith (1958 item A7) but the medal's whereabouts are unknown and reason for issuance not stated. Smith's source is Becklake's notes of 1934. Interestingly, a unique **crowns-size** gold medal with the obverse similar to the ZAR silver 5-shillings of 1892 was presented at the railway festivities to the Postmaster-general, Isaac van Alphen.

The Third SA Numismatic Convention was held in Durban in July 1967. Exhibit 31 was named *The Famous Gold Kruger Half-Crown* and it was exhibited by Dr J.I. Sneider together with a "99" over-stamped pond. The souvenir brochure of the convention describes exhibit 31 as follows: -

EXHIBIT

31

"THE FAMOUS GOLD KRUGER HALF-CROWN"

Dr. J. I. SNEIDER

THIS COIN is without doubt the rarest of all Kruger coins. As far as is known, only two exist; thus making this a "RRRRRRR" exhibit! Apart from this copy, the only other is in the famous Baldwin Collection in London. This coin is from the late Lord Duveen and later the collection of Mr. G. Hearn.

Also shown, is the second rarest Kruger coin . . . the "99" overstamp! Only 130 were overstruck on the 1898 Pond. To substantiate the authenticity of these and other counterstamps, it is often necessary to have the coins photographed and the overstamps enlarged for comparison with known genuine coins.

Source: *Publication of the Third SA Numismatic Convention Durban in July 1967*

Below: (Left to right) At the South African Mint, Dr. J. Sneider, Mrs. Joubert, Ds. Scheepers, Mr. J. Groenewald, Director of the S.A. Mint; Dr. Hannes Joubert, Mr. M. Meyerowitz, Mr. John Jay Pittman and Dr. J.B. Nel.



This picture was taken at the 5th South African Numismatic Convention held in Johannesburg in 1974 that was opened by the Prime Minister, Mr. B.J. Vorster. Dr. Sneider, the exhibitor of the gold half-crown at the convention in Durban in 1967, is shown on the left with the moustache.

Source: *Bickels Coin and Medal News (June 1974 Vol.9 No.4)*

When the gold sixpence of 1897 was offered by Heritage auctions in January 2015, the cataloguer valued the coin based on the sales of similar coins in the past. He wrote:–

“... the 1892 halfcrown in gold is a worthwhile study-piece. That coin, also a unique piece of similar appeal, brought £3,600 in 1963 when it was last sold in a Glendinnings auction. At that time, an 1874 “coarse beard” pond, of which 174 (142 actually) were minted, brought £100, an easily calculable ratio of 36 to 1. Today, with the average selling price for an unflawed Mint State “course beard” pond likely being around \$80,000, that 36 to 1 ratio projects the gold halfcrown at over \$2,500,000!”

Sir Geoffrey Edgar Duveen’s collection was sold in 1964 by Glendinnings in London, where the gold half-crown of 1892 fetched £3 600. As stated above, the coin was later owned by a G. Hearn from whom the exhibitor at the Durban convention in 1967, Dr. Sneider, probably bought it from. G.E. Hearn was a numismatic dealer from 37 Turney Road, London. When Dr. Frank Mitchell visited England in 1956, he met up with Hearn (not to be confused with the South African Numismatist Brian Hern) and says that he is a young man that is particularly interested in the South African series and *“...there’s no doubt that he does get hold of some nice South African items – but at a nice price!”*

Dr. Jacob Isaac “Jack” Sneider (1917-1978), a gynecologist from Durban, was probably the person who sold the coin in 1972 as Elias Levine (1974:73) refers to the coin being sold for £4 400 by Sotheby’s in September that year. Levine notes that Sir Geoffrey Duveen, who was over 90 at that stage (he actually died the next year in 1975), told Mr. Peter Mitchell of Baldwins that his father-in-law by his first marriage was Isaac Lewis, who was a partner of Samuel Marks, the industrialist renowned for the Sammy Marks gold Tickey.

Levine asks *“Could this have been the channel for the gold half-crown?”*

According to Stevenson (1997:19) the relationships between the Duveen and Lewis family is actually closer, as not only was Sir Geoffrey married to Isaac Lewis's daughter (Ethel Fanny), his brother Joseph was engaged to Dora, Lewis's other daughter in November 1898, although nothing came of this engagement. Sammy Marks and Isaac Lewis were also not only partners in Lewis & Marks, but also distant cousins, both originally from Neustadt-Sugind in Lithuania. Sammy Marks's brother Ellia would later marry Isaac Lewis's sister Frederica.

There is another family connection with South Africa: – Sir Geoffrey Edgar Duveen, who owned the gold half-crown, had a cousin Joel Charles Duveen who immigrated to the Transvaal in the mid-1890s. He was to become a hero in the Anglo-Boer War fighting for the Boer forces. He settled in Louis Trichardt in the Northern Transvaal, the same area as where the owner of the Menne Half Pond, Bill Menne farmed, as we will see in the next chapter. Frank Menne, Bill's father from whom he inherited the half pond, certainly knew Joel Duveen well, as they both served in the Zoutpansberg Commando during the Boer War.

As reported above, when the gold half-crown was exhibited in 1967 in Durban it was stated in the convention report that the coin was one of two known, the other one being in the famous Baldwin collection in London. This is most probably incorrect, as there is no record (as far as we know) of such a coin being in the Baldwin collection, but a half-crown in copper of 1892, as mentioned before, did form part of this collection of South African patterns.

Neither a picture of it, nor the current ownership of the gold half-crown of 1892 is known to us. It is also not graded by either the NGC or PCGS. We do have this picture of the copper half-crown that was in the Baldwin, and later in the Hills collection. Baldwin's sold the coin on 26.09.2006 as lot number 5097 (Auction 48).



Source: Werner Lamprecht

This coin, like both the gold and copper sixpences of 1897, has a “coin alignment “ – the obverse being upside down to the obverse vs. the normal “medal alignment” of the Kruger coin series where the obverses and reverses are aligned the same way. It would be interesting to know, if the gold half-crown also has this abnormal alignment, and if it does, the four coins could possibly be from the same initial production source.



Chapter 6

The Menne Single Shaft Half Pond of 1892

Note

This chapter is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 has been previously published as a booklet in 2021. The second part was only published in PDF format for private circulation later that year as a follow-up due to new information received. This is the first time that the 2 parts have been jointly published. Readers will notice the length, format and presentation of this chapter are quite different from other chapters in this book.

Part 1

Introduction

On the 10th October 2009, this being the 184th anniversary of the birthday of Paul Kruger, the former President of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, an interesting article was published in the Afrikaans daily newspaper “*Die Burger*”.

Written by Martiens van Bart, this article was based on a discussion he had had with the late Stephan Wertz the renowned auctioneer and specialist in South African art and antiques. It concerned a gold Kruger Half Pond coin that was sold at auction in Johannesburg in 1977 for a then world record price for a South African coin. Following the sale this unique coin was mysteriously lost.

Toe verdwyn die rare goue Kruger-halfpound

MARTIENS VAN BART
Kaapseval

So op die verjaarsdaghedenking vandag van wyle pres. Paul Kruger van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, is dit heel gepas om 'n maar-waar Kruger-storie te vertel.

Die mitiese Kruger-miljoene laat mense gewoonlik op verbeeldingsvlugte gaan, maar hierdie besonder tragiese staatlj. vertel deur mr. Stephan Welz, oudhede-kemmer van die afslaeffirma Strauss & Kle, van die Oval in Nuweland, is so eg as die goue Kruger-halfpound, wat in 1977 in Johannesburg teen 'n wêreldre-

oordbedrag opgeveel is – en toe spoorloos verdwyn het.

Die verhaal, 'n dubbele tragedie, begin in 1935 toe 'n plaasboer van Louis Trichard in die Bosveld, mr. Bill Memms, sy oorhede vader se versameling munte geef het.

Hy het egter geen belangstelling in die numismatiek, oftewel die munt- en penningkunde, gehad nie. Omdat hy egter daarvan bewus was dat sommige van die munte waarskynlik waardevol was, het hy dit in

'n bankkluis laat bewaar.

Twintig jaar later, in 1955, het 'n koerant-artikel oor die waarde van ou munte wel sy belangstelling geprikkel. Hy het daarop die besonderhede van sy versameling aan die direkteur van die Suid-Afrikaanse

Munt in Pretoria gestuur.

Een van die munte was 'n Kruger-halfpound van 1892, in sy beskrywing van die munt het Memé gemeld dat die ampswaap van die Transvaalse Republiek op die keerkaant ondermeer 'n ossewa met een disselboom toon.

Die direkteur het daarop teruggeskryf dat Memé 'n fout maak. Die ossewa moet twee disselbome hê en die datum kan nie 1892 wees nie. Die graverder in Berlyn, Duitsland, Otto Schultz, het 'n fout gemaak deurdat



Die muntkant van die goue Kruger-halfpound van 1892.



Die kruiskant van die goue Kruger-halfpound van 1892.

hy in plaas van 'n kaapse kakelbeen-wa met een disselboom, groot agterwiele en klein voorwiele, 'n Duitse wa met twee disselbome en ewe groot wiele ontwerp het, het hy geskryf.

Schultz het sy naamsakfonting, OS, onderaan die borsbeeld van pres. Kruger op die muntkant gesplaas. Vir oningeligtes; het dit gelyk of daar na Kruger verwys word as syrede 'n os. Omdat die presidensiele verkleëing die volgende jaar sou plaasvind, het die opposisie se speekwoordelik munt uit die "OS" gesiaan.

Die gevolg was dat die Volksraad beslis het dat die munt tenie geskryfleur mag word nie, maar opgesmelt en in die Staatsmunt in Pretoria oorgemunt. Daar was dus geen amptelike Kruger-munte van 1892 nie, het die direkteur in sy brief geskryf.

Maar Memé het nie 'n fout gemaak nie. Wat die oningeligte direkteur nie gewaet het nie, was dat toe die nuwe Staatsmunt in Pretoria die reggestelde ontwerp in 1895 in gebruik geneem het, is 'n aantal prof-munte met die datum 1892 daarop wel gesiaan. Ook is 'n heelparty van die Duitse "OS"-munte – ponde en half-ponde – nie opgesmelt nie, maar as versamelstukke teruggehou. Die 1892-munt in die Memé-versameling is egter die enigste opgetekende

halfpound met die reggestelde ontwerp in die datum 1892 daarop wat as 'n proefmunt gesiaan is. Van toe af het die seldsame munt bekend gestaan as die Memé-halfpound.

Mr. Bill Memé is in 1974 in 'n plaasrooing wreedaardig vermoor, maar die muntversameling was veilig in die bank. Sy weduwee, mev. Rosemary Memé, het later besluit om die versameling te laat opveel.

Die veiling, deur Sotheby's, van Londen se numismatiese afdeling, is op 20 April 1977 in Johannesburg gehou. Daar was 122 lotte wat altesaam R14 000 behaal het. Die Memé-halfpound het R24 000 behaal, inderby 'n veilingswêreldrekord vir 'n Suid-Afrikaanse munt.

Die hoogste blyet was 'n Durhanse muntbhandelaar wat telefonies gebel het. Die munt is ná die veiling per gereënde pos aan hom gestuur, maar dit het spoorloos in die pos verdwyn. Vandag, na 32 jaar, is dit steeds soek.

Die pakke met die munte was egter ten volle versker om die weduwee het die veilingbedrag ontvang.

The story, a double tragedy, begins in 1935 when Mr William James (Bill) Menne, a well-known and respected farmer in the Northern Transvaal bushveld near Louis Trichardt, inherited his deceased father's coin collection.

At that stage he had no interest in numismatics but thinking that some of the coins might be valuable he kept the coins stored in a bank vault. In 1955 while reading an article in his newspaper about the scarcity of some coins, he remembered his coin collection and decided to look to see what he had stored away for safe keeping 20 years before. He subsequently wrote a letter to the Director (Master) of the South African Mint informing him about his father's collection.

One of the coins he mentioned, was dated 1892 with a "*one shaft ox wagon*" in the crest of the Transvaal Republic on the reverse of the coin. The Director responded and said that it was impossible as only a "*double shaft*" was possible for the issue of that date.

Bill Menne however was not mistaken and from that day on his father's famous (and unique) Half Pond has always been referred to as the "Menne" Single Shaft Half Pond. Since then, vast numbers of ZAR Half Ponde have been eagerly examined by numismatists but another similar coin has never been found.

Tragically Bill was viciously killed whilst still living on his Louis Trichardt farm in the early 1970s, but luckily his collection was safely stored at the bank. His widow, Rosemary Menne, subsequently decided a few years later to sell her husband's coin collection at auction. The auction was held in Johannesburg by Sotheby Parke Bernet South Africa on 20 April 1977. The sale of the 142 lots on offer realized a total of R114 000. The famous Half Pond was bought by a telephone bidder for the amount of R24 000 which at that stage was a world record price for any South African coin. (In today's money this equates to almost one million rand).

The successful bidder was a recognized and well-known South African

coin dealer living in Durban. As was the custom in those days the coin was dispatched to him by post but mysteriously it did not reach its destination. Today after more than 44 years the coin is still lost. Fortunately, the precaution had been taken to insure the parcel and Bill's widow Rosemary received the full auction price.



Bill Menne and his wife Rosemary



The Menne Family History

William (Bill) Menne's grandfather, Theodore Menne, was born on 7 September 1813 on a farm in Neuhaus, near Paderborn, a city in eastern North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany.

When he was still in his teens Theodore travelled to Holland where in order to learn to speak English he took on employment as a baker's assistant. In August 1832 he purchased a ticket on a sailing boat destined for America. The winds however drove the boat in which he was sailing far to the south and landing in Brazil rather than in America he was left with little alternative but to wait it out for the change of the season which would be expected to bring favorable winds to sail northwards or alternatively to continue with his maritime journey and sail further on to the Cape of Good Hope.

This was the option he chose and he arrived in Cape Town in March 1833. Clearly, he was an enterprising young man and he spent the next few years travelling up and down through what is now South Africa, trading with the indigenous tribes and for a very successful period with the Boers during their Great Trek northwards swapping goods for cattle which he drove back through the Karoo to sell to ships passing through Cape Town. His business brought him into contact with the Hellet family, in particular one Johan Pieter Hellet and his children. John Pieter was born in Regenswald in Prussia and had travelled to South Africa as a Captain of a British ship. On 7 April 1844 Theodore married one of his daughters, Johanna Wilhelmina Maria Gertruida Hellet, in Cape Town where Johanna had been born on 4 May 1821. Theodore subsequently farmed

at “Menneheim” near Greytown in Natal and died almost 20 years after Johanna’s death on 21 June 1905 at the age of 91.

During the course of the friendship between the two families Theodore also befriended Johanna’s elder brother Pieter Jurgen Ellis Hellet who was born in 1831 and later became a prosperous shopkeeper in Greytown. The Menne and Hellet families in fact became such good friends that Pieter named one of his own daughter’s Menne Hellet and appointed Theodore as the Executor of his Estate. One might guess that Theodore had much to do with his new brother-in-law’s prosperity as a shopkeeper.

Theodore and Gertruida had fourteen children, their eleventh being Bill Menne’s father, Francis Charles (Frank) Menne who was born on 17 April 1867. It was from him that Bill inherited the famous Half Pond. Frank was born on his father’s farm in Greytown, but later settled near Pietersburg (currently Polokwane) in the Northern Transvaal where Bill was born on 28 November 1898.



Theodore Menne
(Born 1813)

Francis Charles (Frank)
Menne
(Born 1867)

William James (Bill) Menne
(Born 1898)

The advent of the Anglo Boer War sadly brought about opposing allegiances within many South African families. As a resident of Pietersburg, Bill's father Frank sided with the Boers during the Anglo Boer War and served in the Zoutpansberg Commando later claiming and being awarded the Anglo Boere Oorlog medalje.

As frontier farmers members of the Menne family had served in the military years before. The elder Theodore's brother-in-law Pieter Jurgen Ellis Hellet had been appointed as the Officer Commanding the Natal Hussars in 1874 while his son, a younger Theodore, Bill's uncle, was appointed as Quartermaster and later served as a Lieutenant during the Zulu War in 1879. Twenty years later he once again sided with the British and after the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War in October 1899 he initially served in the Colonial Scouts commanding 'G' Squadron taking part in the operations of the Relief of Ladysmith and Tugela Heights. He then served



as Officer Commanding “F” Squadron in Bethune’s Mounted Infantry taking part in the actions at Laing’s Nek. He later raised and commanding the unit known as Menne’s Scouts on 16 December 1900 taking part in the operations in the Orange Free State and the Eastern Transvaal and continued to command the Scouts bearing his name through to the end of the War. The Menne family history is yet another which illustrates the deep tragedy of the Anglo Boer War. Hopefully the uncle and nephew never aimed their rifles at one another.

Bill married Rosemary Harrison on 16 May 1932 and they settled on the farm Vergenoeg, near Louis Trichardt in the Zoutpansberg. Rosemary’s grandfather, John Skinner Cooksley was born in Devon, England in 1837. Having come out to South Africa in the mid 1860’s John had first worked as a local trader and in 1880 began farming in the area of Lovedale Park, Spelonken in Polokwane where Rosemary’s mother “Tish” grew up.

Bill Menne took a keen interest in his local community and served on the local Rapportryers Reëlingskomitee of Louis Trichardt in 1949 when the Voortrekker Monument was officially opened in Pretoria. He was also one of the founding members of the Rotary Club when a branch was first established in Louis Trichardt in 1959. He was undoubtedly a man of good standing in his community.

The Striking of the first Paul Kruger Coins in 1892

In his book *From Real to Rand*, published in 1963, James Thomas Becklake (the last Deputy Master of the Royal Mint, Pretoria and the first Director of the South African Mint) described how President Kruger was anxious “for political reasons” to get the first series of coins, ordered from the Berlin Mint, into circulation.

“As soon as the first consignments of 1892 consisting of the ponde, half ponde and five shillings, arrived from Germany and began to circulate among the population, there was at once severe criticism of the coins owing to the fact that the wagon

on the reverse of the design (the Coat-of-Arms of the Republic) had two shafts instead of the single 'disselboom' typical of the Transvaal wagons of the period".

A second error was the fact that the coins struck in Germany showed the wagon with the same size front and back wheels, whilst the usual South African ox wagon's front wheels were always smaller than the back wheels.

Becklake continues *"From the President's point of view there was yet another unfortunate circumstance about these coins, since the engraver's very small initials, inserted as is usual on the truncation of the bust of the President, were O.S. (Otto Schultz). In the Dutch language 'OS' stands for 'Ox'."*

As the next Transvaal election was due to be held in early 1893 President Kruger made every effort to recover the situation by withdrawing the error coins from circulation. As events transpired Paul Kruger won the presidency by the slightest of margins receiving only 845 more votes than his main opponent, Piet Joubert.

The success in withdrawing the erroneous double shafted coins in 1892 is however a debatable point as according to mintage figures provided by Becklake himself the number of coins minted in 1892 were as follow:-

- Five shillings, 4 327 double shafts (Berlin Mint) & 14 000 single shafts (Pretoria Mint).
- Half Pond, 10 150 coins were struck (all in Germany).
- Pond, 15 650 coins were struck (all in Germany).

It is believed that all these Ponde struck in Germany were double shafts, while the scarcer single shaft Ponde dated 1892, were actually struck in Pretoria the following year in 1893 using the remodeled 1892 dies (see Becklake page 26).

Some South African numismatists believe that the number of 15 650 Ponde bearing the date 1892 include both the single shaft and double shaft coins, but I deduce from Becklake's reasoning that this number only refers to those double shaft coins which were struck in Germany.

Experienced coin collectors know that the single shaft Ponde (not the Half Ponde) of 1892 is much scarcer than the double shaft Ponde, so one must assume that either the withdrawal of the double shafts was relatively unsuccessful or only a small number of single shaft Ponde were struck in 1893 with 1892 dies.

If one for instance looks at the number of 1892 Ponde graded by the two largest international grading companies being the NGC and PCGS, the single shaft issue (219 coins graded) is more than three times scarcer than the double shaft with 692 coins graded.

As noted above, Becklake states that the first pieces with the corrected single shaft wagon appear to have been struck in Pretoria in the following years: –

- Ponde struck in 1893 with 1892 dies,
- Half Ponde struck in 1894 with 1893 dies,
- Five–Shillings struck in 1893 with 1892 dies.

From this one can deduce that no single shaft Half Ponde were struck bearing the date 1892.

Becklake then continues to tell the story of the single shaft Half Ponde of 1892 which was presented to members of the Transvaal Numismatic Society for inspection by Mr. W.J.C. Menne of Louis Trichardt in 1956. The majority of these learned numismatists were of the opinion that the coin was genuine.

“This coin, which showed considerable wear, was inherited by Mr. Menne together with a set of ZAR coins, from his father in 1935. At that time they were withdrawn from the bank together with a memo, dated 9 January 1905 which had been made by his father. It listed each coin in the collection, which consisted of all the denominations and years of issue from 1892 – 1902 but not the 1892 single shaft Half Ponde. The collection was returned to the bank for safekeeping for a further

21 years. Thus it appears that the coin in question was acquired by Mr. Menne's farther between 1905 and 1935 and added to the collection in the bank. Efforts were made to ascertain whether the reverse die of the 1892 single shaft (half) pond was ever officially made, but without success, and the circumstances of the manufacture of this piece have apply been described by H.M. Stoker as a mystery."

The Stoker article – The Mystery of the ZAR Single Shaft ½ Pond of 1892

As his reference to his story on the Menne Half Pond, Becklake referred to the article that was written by Dr. H.M. Stoker, an experienced numismatist and then President of the Transvaal Numismatic Society and which was published in *De Nummis*, the Journal of the Transvaal Numismatic Society (Number 2 1956-1957).

Dr. Stoker recorded that Mr. Menne presented the coin for inspection at the Annual General Meeting of the Transvaal Numismatic Society held at Mint House on 7th May 1956. During that month, the coin and enlarged photographs thereof was closely scrutinized by the Executive Committee of the Society. The coin was then submitted to the Director of the South African Mint for testing and further examination.

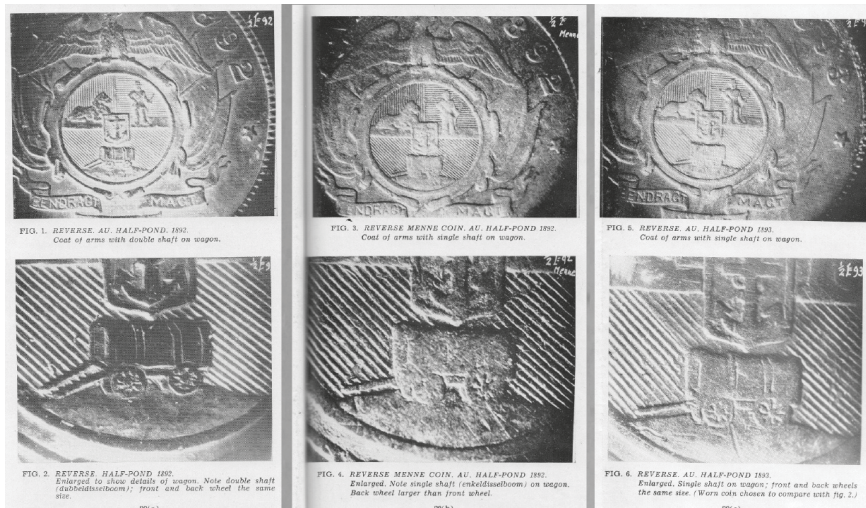
He states: "*The Director of the S.A. Mint, who has personally made an exhaustive examination of the piece, stated that it is a genuine ½ Pond. He added that in view of the fact that many valuable records of the Transvaal Republic's Mint has disappeared, he was doubtful if the original purpose of its minting will ever be known ... It is probably a parallel coin with the gold Tickey dated 1894, presently in the Mint's Numismatic Museum.*"

Herman Stoker went on to describe the efforts that were then made to ascertain whether the reverse die of the single 1892 Half Pond had ever been made. Apparently, there were a considerable number of dies of ZAR coins kept at the "Old Museum" in Boomstraat, but the die in question was not amongst them. Interestingly enough, amongst the dies in the collection were eight 1898 Half Pond reverse dies and two for an 1894

Crown – coins that were never struck. Stoker also noted that before the Second World War he saw a reverse die for an 1893 Crown (5-Shillings) displayed in a showcase at the German Mint in Berlin.

With regard to the weight of Mr Menne’s coin, Dr. Stoker stated that the standard weight of a Z.A.R. Half Pond was 3.99402 grams with a lowest weight of 3.96083 grams. The Menne Half Pond underwent a weight and density test by an official of the S.A. Mint’s Gold and Silver Assay Department. It weighed 3.9208 grams and was struck in 22 carat gold and he noted that “*The coin, although it falls short of the least current weight by 0.04 grams, is still a very collectable collector’s piece*”.

Dr. Stoker’s brother, Mr. P. Stoker of Pretoria, took some close-up photographs of the Menne Half Pond and for comparison also photographs of a similar double shaft coin dated 1892 as well as a single shaft coin dated 1893. Letters, accompanied by these enlarged photographs were then submitted to eminent numismatists in England and Holland for comment.



Dr. Stoker concludes “*The consensus of opinion, although not explicitly so expressed and with certain reservations, was that the coin appears to be genuine.*”

It was stated by some that nothing suspicious could be found from the photographs and that there seemed to be no doubt that the single shaft is not a double shaft altered ... furthermore, the fact that the coin had been in circulation is in its favour and tends to substantiate its authenticity."

The Exhibition of the Menne Half Pond

The Menne Half Pond was exhibited by Mr. Menne at the Second South African Numismatic Convention held at the Old Supreme Court in Cape Town from 7 to 12 January 1964. The coin was once again re-examined by the leading numismatic experts in Cape Town. A short write-up of the coin was published on page 70 of the catalogue of the convention's exhibits, edited by M.G. Hibbard.

On 6 January 1964, the Cape Town daily newspaper *The Argus*, published an article entitled "Numismatist to display rarest coins tomorrow" and states how Mr. William Menne came 1,350 miles by road to Cape Town bearing a gold coin that leading numismatists have assured him never existed. The coin was to be part of the numismatic exhibition at the Old Supreme Court starting the next day.

Mr. Menne relays to the reporter how he became a coin collector by chance after inheriting a gold coin collection

THE CAPE ARGUS, MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 1964

Numismatists to display rarest coins to-morrow

MR. WILLIAM MENNE has come 1,350 miles by road to Cape Town bearing a gold coin that leading numismatists have assured him never existed.

He, in his off-white linen suit, will be a notable figure at the numismatic conference and exhibition which Dr. Dinges will open at the Old Supreme Court to-morrow morning.

Mr. Menne's coin will be one of the prized exhibits, as most about it before you join the throng around the glass case of South African coins that money cannot buy.

He became a coin collector by accident," said Menne when he joined me for a cup of tea to-day.

"My father, a SA Republic Boer, put the disputed coin in the bank 30 years ago. It was bequeathed to me with other golden coins.

Only one

"One day I took it out of the bank and became interested in it. I wrote to the late Dr. A. Kaplan of Grahamstown, a great coin collector. He replied that such a coin had never been minted.

"I wrote to J. P. Roux, Master of the Mint, and said I had this 'single-shaft Kruger half-pond.' He shook his head over it.

"I showed it to Dr. Steiner, president of the Transvaal Numismatic Society.

"He said it was genuine and probably the only one ever minted. So among coin collectors the coin has a fabulous reputation. And now it is in Cape Town for all to see."

Gold shillings

All sorts of coins will be trotted out to-morrow, including my rare gold coin with the head of a Portuguese king on one side and on the other the words in English, "Thirty-six shillings."

"That coin is a mystery which I hope will be solved during the conference.

Coin chairman

The coin man to know in Cape Town is Dr. Frank Mitchell, chairman of the Cape numismatists. (You may remember Frank as the Divisional Council member who fights epidemic disease and especially polio.)

He will be welcoming delegates from all over South Africa, but few, I'll wager, from farther away than William Menne, the Northern Transvaal raider.

On Menne's journey through the Karoo he and other southward-bound travellers, found Laingsburg staying in a hotel because of birding p.

TALK at the TAVERN of the SEAS



Mr. William Menne

'Valuable coins need not be old.'

Value of coins

Back to the numismatists for a moment.

By all means bring out your coins to show the tips-off fellows, but remember their advice:

'Old coins need not be valuable.

'Valuable coins need not be old.

Rarely and mint-condition are two big points.

The Wanderer

from his father many years ago. Many years later he retrieved it from the bank where it was stored and showed it to Dr. Alec Kaplan of Germiston (Dr. Kaplan wrote the first South African Coin Catalogue in 1950) who replied that such a coin has never been minted.

Menne then wrote to Mr. J.P. le Roux, Master at the South African Mint who told him that it was the first ever recorded single shaft Half Pond. He then showed it to Dr. Stoker, the President of the Transvaal Numismatic Society who said it was genuine and probably the only one ever minted. The article concludes ...*“So among coin collectors the coin has a fabulous reputation. And now it is in Cape Town for all to see.”*

The unique Half Pond was once again exhibited by Mr Menne (with some family military medals) at the 4th South African Numismatic Convention held at the City Hall in Pretoria from 26 October to 31 October 1970. A guide to the exhibits (it was exhibit 3) states *“The 1892 Single Shaft 10/- (half-pond) is absolutely unique and is undoubtedly the rarest coin on exhibition in the hall”*.

De Nummis, the Journal of the Transvaal Numismatic Society (number 4 1971) provides a record of the papers read at this 4th Numismatic Convention held in Pretoria. A paper was read by Dr. Robert Morris on *Notable Firsts in Transvaal Numismatics* and remarked *“There is also the mystery of the only copy of the unique Single Shaft Menne half pond which is exhibited by Mr. Menne and of which I can say nothing except that it is an authentic coin of the Kruger series, but how or why it was minted remains unknown.”*



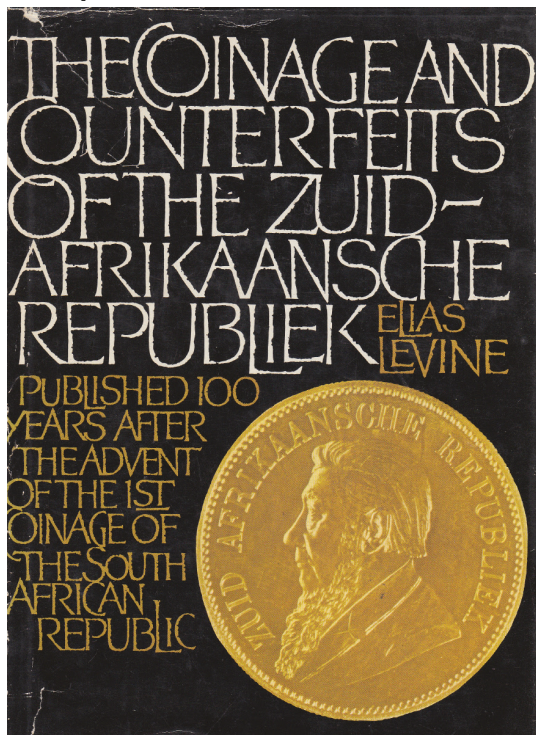
Bill Menne at the Convention

It is interesting to note that Mr. Menne himself read a paper at the convention entitled *Thoughts on collecting and disposal of a coin collection*. This paper is of so much relevance today as Menne was tragically murdered a few years later and his collection disposed thereafter by his family. (The short paper is reprinted in full as an addendum to this booklet).

The paper that followed Menne's at the conference was read by Dr. Herman Stoker on President Kruger's last visit to Europe and his stay in France and Germany. Dr. Stoker was the person who wrote the article on the Menne Half Pond that was published in *De Nummis*, the Journal of the Transvaal Numismatic Society (Number 2 1956-1957).

Elias Levine's assessment of the Menne Half Pond

In 1974, the centenary year of South Africa's first gold Pond, the Burgerspond, Elias Levine published *The Coinage and Counterfeits of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*.



On page 74 he discusses the Menne Half Pond describing it is a great rarity due to the fact that it was the only single shaft variety of the 1892 Half Pond known. He stated that leading experts have long debated its authenticity, and have come to the conclusion that the coin is genuine.

“However, in the light of new knowledge and information which has developed as regards to forgeries, it is necessary to reconsider all aspects relating to its genuineness.”

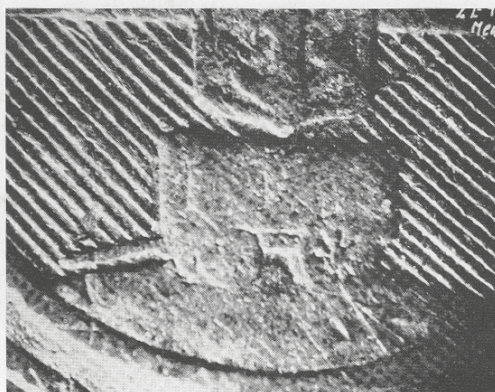
1892 HALF POND, SINGLE SHAFT



69 XX (a) Genuine (1892 D/S)



69 XX (b) Genuine (1895)



70 XX Single Shaft Half Pond (Menne)

Levine then lists three “detracting” factors that he follows up with three “factors which militate in its favour.”

The detracting factors are the following:-

1. *The coin weighs 3.9208 grams, which is a variation of 1.83% from standard. Compare this with sample weighings, where the lowest weight recorded for a coin in Fine condition is 3.952 grams – the variance is 1.05%.*
2. *Comparisons of the lack of detail on the wagon and the anchor with correspondingly graded coins, 1892 and 1895 half ponde in Fine condition, weighing 3.952 and 3.953 grams respectively (Levine then refers the reader to the illustrations on page 41 of his book).*
3. *The similarity of the lack of detail on the wagon and anchor with known forgeries, viz. the 1892 half pond, wagon variety, F16 (Illustration: Page 40 of his book) and the 1898 Pond “Elite” variety, F27 (Illustration: Page 47 of his book).*

And factors which militated in favour of the Menne Half-pond being genuine as follows:-

1. *In his book “Die Deutschen Reichsmunzen”^{**} by Dr. Hugo Hammerich, published in Berlin in 1905, the 1892 HalfPond die is included in a list of master dies (or punches) “for all subsequent minting in Pretoria” preserved at that date (1905) at the Berlin Mint. The list follows Dr. Hammerich’s account of the correction of the double shaft errors. As only one each of the 1892 Pond, HalfPond and Crown dies are listed, one must assume that these refer to the single shaft varieties, including the Half Pond. This indicates that although there is no record of the single shaft HalfPond dies having been received by the ZAR mint, nor any of these pieces officially minted, such genuine dies are most likely to have been produced by the Berlin Mint”.*
2. *The indentation between the front and the rear wheels on the wagon is more pronounced on the Menne Half Pond than on F16 and F27, in spite of the former being greatly worn.*

3. *The most important, although subjective, test is that only one of these pieces has come to light in all the years of this coin's existence.... Mr. J.P. le Roux, a former Mint Master, considered the coin to be genuine, although it was too worn for him to be able to check the number of flutes on the milling, and the number of beads. On balance of probabilities the coin would be genuine, but the writer would need to see the coin itself before finally committing himself either way.*

I ordered a digital copy of the book *Die Deutschen Reichsmunzen* from the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives in the USA. On page 83 of his book Dr. Hugo Hammerich gives the actual number of ZAR coins struck for each denomination in the first year 1892. (One notes that some of the Ponde were actually struck in 1891, with 1892 dies).

Dr. Hugo Hammerich then reports that the dies were made by the medalist Otto Schultz and describes in detail the errors that occurred on the Ponde, Half Ponde and 5-Shilling pieces. When the Berlin mint was informed of this, the dies for the other denominations were immediately changed accordingly, so that “*only small numbers of these coins (5/-, ½ Pond and Pond) came into circulation*”.

If I read this correctly, dies were already made for the other denominations, but they were changed and these erroneous dies were probably destroyed and thus never used.

Dr. Hammerich then says that all the dies for the later minting of the new coins issued in Pretoria from 1 August 1892 were supplied by the Berlin Mint. He then provides a list of the various dates and denominations. Dies that are listed, but that we know were not used for striking coins for general circulation, is 1898 for the Half Pond, 1893 and 1894 for the 5-Shillings, and 1898 for all the other silver denominations. Hammerich states that the Berlin Mint were in possession of examples of all these dies. (It is worth noting that Dr. Hammerich notes the date of 1 August 1892 as being the date when the Pretoria Mint started production. In his recent

book *Kruger's Gold* (2019:52) Professor Francois Malan notes that the State Mint in Pretoria only started producing coins during November 1892).

The important question here is the following: In terms of what Dr. Hammerich wrote, is Elias Levine correct in saying “*As only one each of the 1892 Pond, Half Pond and Crown dies are listed* (by Dr Hammerich), *one must assume that these refer to the single shaft varieties, including the Half Pond?*” If Levine’s assessment is correct, then the Berlin Mint must have had an example of the single shaft 1892 Half Pond reverse die in their collection when the book was written in 1905.

However, although Hammerich states that the corrected dies were then sent to Pretoria in 1892, he does not specify that the Half Pond die was included with the shipment. We actually know that the first corrected Half Ponde were only struck in Pretoria with 1893 dies in 1894 and for some unknown reason only a relatively small number of these dated 1893 were struck.

If the Berlin Mint indeed sent the 1892 die, why did the Pretoria Mint not use it like they did for the other denominations? It is also not clear to me why Levine thought that the list of dies produced by the Berlin mint (as supplied by Hammerich), only refers to the corrected dies. As my understanding of the German text is perhaps incorrect, I have included the relevant page here.

Berlin.

Republik Transvaal.

Es sind geprägt im Jahre	Goldmünzen		Silbermünzen						Bronzemünzen
	$\frac{1}{4}$ Pond	$\frac{1}{2}$ Pond	5 Schillings	$2\frac{1}{2}$ Schillings	2 Schillings	1 Schilling	6 Pence	3 Pence	1 Penny
	Pond	Pond	Pond	Pond	Pond	Pond	Pond	Pond	Pond
1891	15.650	—	—	—	5500	6000	—	—	—
1892	mitd. Jhrz. 1892	5.075	1.081.75	2.037.50	2.030. —	4.015. —	707.50	303.75	116. ²² ₂₄₀
Stückzahl	15.650	10.150	4.327	16.300	20.300	80.300	28.300	24.300	27.862

Anmerkungen. Die Stempel sämtlicher Sorten, welche die überhaupt erste Transvaaler Prägung darstellen, sind vom Medailleur Schultz geschnitten.

Bei den zuerst abgelieferten $\frac{1}{4}$ - u. $\frac{1}{2}$ -Pond-Stücken befinden sich die Initialen des Medailleurs Schultz — O. S. — auf dem Halsabschnitt des Bildnisses des Präsidenten Krüger; dieselben mussten auf Verlangen der Transvaaler Regierung auf den Stempeln wieder entfernt werden, sodass nur relativ wenige Stücke mit den Initialen zur Veräußerung gelangt sind.

Es wurde ferner bei den zuerst geprägten $\frac{1}{4}$ - und $\frac{1}{2}$ -Pond-, sowie bei den 5 Schillings-Stücken beanstandet, dass das Wappen nicht ganz vorschriftsmässig war, indem der Ochsenwagen nur **eine** Deichsel, keinen Scherbaum haben sollte, und dass ausserdem die Vorderräder kleiner als die Hinterräder sein sollten. Es wurden in Folge dessen sämtliche Patrizen, auch die der anderen, noch nicht geprägten Sorten, sofort entsprechend geändert, sodass auch von diesen fehlerhaften Münzen nur eine kleine Anzahl in den Verkehr gekommen ist.

Für alle späteren, auf der am 1. August 1892 neugeschaffenen Münze zu Prätoria stattgehabten Prägungen, wurden die Stempel von der Berliner Münzstätte geliefert. Nach den hier aufbewahrten Ur-Patrizen wurden folgende Jahrgänge der verschiedenen Sorten, bis zur Annexion durch England, hergestellt:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ Pond: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1900.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Pond: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.
- 5 Schillings: 1892, 1893, 1894.
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ Schillings: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.
- 2 Schillings: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.
- 1 Schilling: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.
- 6 Pence: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.
- 3 Pence: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.
- 1 Penny: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1896.

Other References to the Menne Half Pond

There are various other South African Numismatic publications which refer to the Menne Half Pond, but none of these provide any additional details (or new information) than those given by either Dr. Stoker or Elias Levine.

Examples are: *Ons Gelderfenis* (1980:35) by Matthy Esterhuysen and *Money in South Africa* (1987:77) by Carel Engelbrecht.

In September 2009, Dr. Georg Jacobs, a prominent coin collector from KwaZulu Natal started an interesting online thread on the South African

Bidorbuy Coin Forum entitled “*The lonely Single Shaft Halfpond.*” Amongst other interesting observations, Dr. Jacobs stated that the NGC (Numismatic Guarantee Company of America) graded a single shaft 1892 Half Pond two years ago, only to remove it from their population report a few months later.

A number of coin enthusiasts participated and some very interesting inputs were given and comments made.

Jan Kleinhans from Gauteng commented:–

“Considering the article in the DE NUMMIS Nr 2. 1956-1957 and the photographs that accompanied the article by Mr. H.M. Stoker there is no doubt in my mind that such a piece exist or at least at one time existed. In those days it would have been simply impossible to “tool” any half-pond to such perfection and besides it is a Single Shaft wagon with the back wheels of the wagon larger than the front. The mount on which the wagon stands is also different in a single shaft and double shaft with the mount on the double shaft at a sharper angle downward at the shaft end to that of the single shaft coins”.

Mike Klee from Port Elizabeth responded:-

“What worries me is that it is “a VF type of Halfpond”.....which indicates that it was poorly minted or subjected to wear and tear from being in circulation. Since this was supposed to be a specimen coin – like the single “9” and double “9s” – why would it be badly minted? Secondly, as a specimen coin, it is even less likely to have been put into circulation.....from which it mysteriously is rediscovered, rather like the proverbial needle in a haystack. Also, I would imagine that it is easier to make a fake of poor quality and justify this poor quality to wear and tear than it is to fake/alter a specimen so perfectly that it appears to be the genuine thing? Because of the reported poor quality of this 1892 single shaft half pond, the balance of probabilities to my mind tilt towards this 1892 single shaft half pond as being a fake...”.

After I responded to this, Mike Klee asks:-

“I would really like to believe in the existence of this coin, but I would like you to explain to me how a prized non-circulating coin can end up in a VF condition?”

I then responded with this answer:-

*“A world famous coin is the 1894-S Barber Dime. With only ten specimens of this coin existing today (from the 24 originally minted in San Francisco), this coin is considered one of the most famous rare coins and also one of the most expensive being priced at \$2 million. The 24 coins were produced in the mint in San Francisco in 1894 by the order of the mint superintendent, J. Daggett. The coins were especially made to be given as gifts to banker friends while three were given away to the superintendent’s daughter, Hallie Daggett. Hallie bought one dime worth of ice cream. This barber dime is now called the “**Ice Cream Specimen**” and she sold the two others in 1954.”*

Another interesting input was by Thomas van der Spuy from Cape Town who says...

“Just a comparison to this coin: November 15, 1973 – New York City New Netherland Coin Co and Seaby’s Coin Auction Lot no# 787 – 1892 DS 1/2 Pond Trial Striking in Silver. Estimate: R1650.00 – R2500.00. A local newspaper article just before the scheduled date of the sale mentioned that this rarity would possibly fetch R4000.00. Comparing the sale price of this coin to the 1973 CAT price of a normal ½ pond in UNC this coin would according to coin inflation sell for R1 100 000.00 (normal 92 ½ pond unc being R200 in 1973). The mint master at the time stated that there was no official record of this trial striking, and that it had to be a forgery. If it was not for more of this “trial striking” pieces being discovered this lot would have been sold for “a house’s price“ What makes this coin any different from the 1892 SS 1/2 pond?”

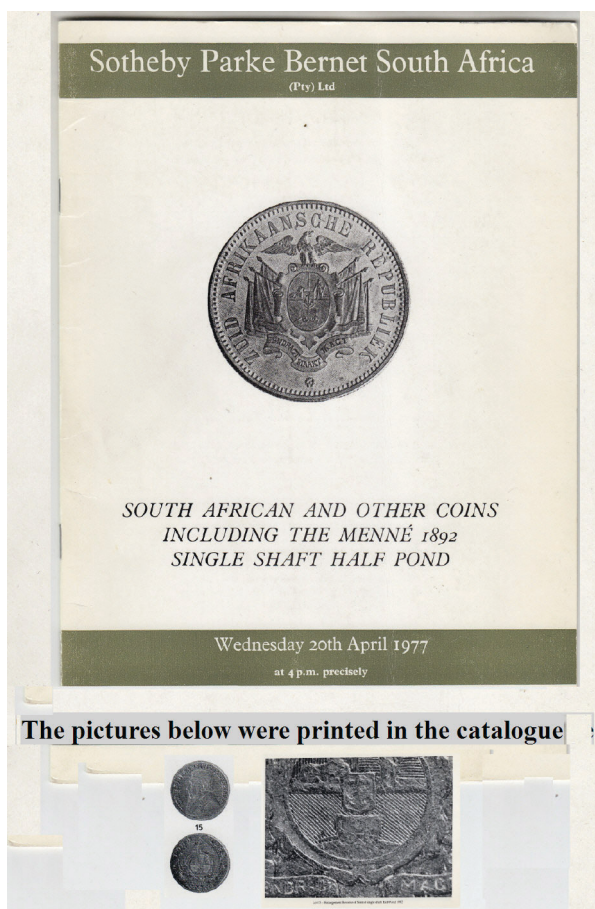
A NGC certified Single Shaft Half Pond of 1892

Recently I was commissioned to offer for sale a pair of NGC graded 1892 Half Ponde. These two coins had been certified by NGC as a single shaft (XF40) and a double shaft (AU58) – both dated 1892! On closer inspection it was obvious that NGC made an error – the single shaft was actually a double shaft coin as is clear from the following two pictures.



The Sale of the Menne Half Pond

The Menne coin collection, including the famous single shaft Half Pond of 1892, was offered for sale by Sotheby Parke Bernet South Africa (Pty) Ltd in their Johannesburg Auction held on Wednesday 20th April 1977. They published a 17 page catalogue which included black and white plates titled *Catalogue of South African and other coins including the Menné 1892 single shaft half pond*. It is not known if all the lots in the sale belonged to the Menne family: – they probably did not.



There were various other rarities offered in this sale.

The first nine items were Thomas F. Burgers issues including three uncirculated 1874 Ponde, two being the fine beard, and one the coarse beard variety. Patterns of the crown, half-crown, two-pence and two penny pieces were also offered.

In the Paul Kruger coinage series there were 36 lots, including various proof sets and individual proof coins of 1892. Surprisingly, a proof *single shaft* 5-Shillings was offered as lot number 18. This was either a typing mistake or another unique coin in the sale, most probably the former. (Lot 34 for example, was erroneously described as a Pond dated 1857).

The Numismatic Guarantee Company (NGC) has never graded a **proof** single shaft 5-shilling coin – only the double shaft variety.

Another rarity was lot number 38A, an 1898 Pond with the rare “99” overstamp that was sold with a certificate from the British Museum in London. Two Sammy Marks Tickeys and a Veld Pond were also offered.

Three dies for ZAR coins were listed as lots number 45, 46 and 47 respectively and all three were described as **probably unique**, being:-

Lot 45: *Obverse die from a proposed Burgers Penny, c. 1874. Oval central shield etc. as the pond reverse. No patterns are known to have been struck using this die, very fine and probably unique.*

Lot 46: *Master die for the reverse of a crown proposed Kruger coinage c. 1890. The oval shield with ornate frame and arrangement of the banner are typical of the previous Burger coinage, very fine and probably unique.*

Lot 47: *Obverse working die for a proposed Kruger Pond, 1892. Burgers type oval shield etc. but eagle's spread wings similar to design finally approved. The die is signed and dated O.S. (Otto Scultz) 28.5.92, very fine and probably unique.*

The next section in the auction consisted of 8 patterns of the Orange Free State, Cape of Good Hope and South African Republic. Then followed coins of the Union of South Africa, coins of the Republic of South Africa

and finally 14 lots of foreign gold coins.

The star of the sale, the Menne 1892 Single Shaft Half Pond, was described as follows:-

Lot 15: Half pond, 1892, single shaft (K. –; Bi-), obverse and reverse identical to 1893 issue except for the date. See De Nummis Number 2, for further information and enlargement photographs. The coin is fully authenticated and it is now known that dies were proposed for an 1892 single shaft half pond. Although worn, the coin is unique and the rarest coin of the South African series.

As reported in the introduction, 142 lots were auctioned off for a total of R114 000, a sum that equals almost R4.5 million in 2021. The Half Pond realized R24 000 against a rather optimistic pre-sale estimate of R30 000 – R40 000 (but then one must take into account that the catalogue was poorly conceived – even for its day).

The sum of R24 000 was at that stage a world record for a South African Coin. (In today's money just under a million rand.) The winning bidder was a South African coin dealer from Durban who had placed his bid telephonically. The coin, duly insured, was dispatched to him by post, but mysteriously it did not reach its destination. Today after more than 44 years, the coin is still lost.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the famous Menne Single Shaft Half Pond is genuine.

Firstly, although it would be very difficult, it might be possible to retool a double shaft to appear like a single shaft coin, but it would simply be impossible to change (reduce) the size of the front wheels of the ox wagon. It would also be impossible to change another date to 1892 without the deception being spotted by an expert.

This means that the Menne Half Pond must have been struck with the reverse die intended for an 1892 single shaft coin. This die could either have been manufactured officially (as is Elias Levine's take on the

corrected dies mentioned in *Die Deutschen Reichsmunzen (1905)* by Dr. Hugo Hammerich) or else the die itself must have been unofficially and illegally manufactured.

Illegal dies for gold Kruger coins have been made before, the best example being for striking the fake gold Ponde dated 1900 that surfaced in the 1960s. However, when counterfeit coins are struck, the reason is usually for financial gain, so the forger would like the coin(s) to be struck “perfectly” and sold as high grade specimens.

The Menne Half Pond was a circulated coin worn down to almost F condition, so the forger either used a worn self-manufactured die (improbable to impossible) or put the coin in circulation for a couple of years and then retrieved it (impossible) or kept the coin in his purse and “played” with it for a couple of years to wear it down (improbable to impossible). Secondly, if the illegal die was made (surely at a great cost) why strike only one coin (or at best a few) with it?

Thus, if one accepts that the Menne Half Pond was struck with official dies, perhaps as a specimen or trial-strike coin, the question might be asked: “How did it end up in circulation?”

This question is not that difficult to answer. I have already mentioned the ultra-scarce 1894-S Barber Dime, valued at US\$2 million, which was used to buy an ice cream by the daughter of the San Francisco mint superintendent, J. Daggett. Closer to home I have personally seen a fairly worn 1949 South African shilling and would not have given it a second glance if it was not for the fact that no South African shilling dated 1949 were struck for general circulation. All shillings dated 1949 were struck as Proof and the uncirculated 1949 coin sets sold by the South African Mint did not include a shilling of that year. Clearly this was a Proof coin which had never the less circulated for many years.

As reported before, Becklake stated that the first coins with the corrected single shaft wagon appear to have been struck in Pretoria in the

following years:–

- Ponde struck in 1893 with 1892 dies
- Half Ponde struck in 1894 with 1893 dies
- Five–shillings struck in 1893 with 1892 dies.

The Half Ponde of 1892 (double shaft) were struck in Berlin in 1892 and the first single shaft Half Ponde (dated 1893) were struck in Pretoria in 1894. No Half Ponde were thus struck in 1893. Why not? Probably because the corrected single shaft dies were not yet available (as opposed to those for the Pond and 5-Shillings which were).

So in my view the corrected dies for the 1892 Pond and 5-Shillings were sent to South Africa but the Half Pond dies were not yet ready and were not included with the batch. The first Half Pond dies to arrive in the Transvaal were for the 1893 issue which were actually struck in 1894. I firmly believe that the corrected 1892 Half Pond dies (if they were indeed manufactured as suggested by Levine's take on *Dr. Hugo Hammerich's book*) were never sent to South Africa.

I am therefore of the opinion that the Menne Half Pond was most probably struck in Berlin as a once-off (or very limited) trial piece and that it was then sent to the Pretoria Mint. (There were constantly correspondence and items sent from Berlin to Pretoria as most of the minting machinery and equipment were manufactured in Germany). But even if was indeed struck in Pretoria as a trial piece (with the dies that supposedly did arrive), it then found its way into circulation, either by being stolen or by mistake with other Half Ponde.

The theft of coins from Government Mints is a practice as old as Mints have existed. In 2002 an American Double Eagle gold coin of 1933 was sold for \$7.6 million. The coin was originally smuggled out of the mint by a cashier and it later ended up in the collection of King Farouk of Egypt. The King was coincidentally also the owner of another unique South African gold coin, the so called "single 9" Kruger Pond.

A few last observations

The Menne Half Pond was part of a coin collection that Bill Menne inherited in 1935 from his father Frank, but it is interesting to note that Frank only died five years later in 1940. When Bill inherited the coins they were accompanied by a note written by his father dated 9 January 1905, the same year that his grandfather Theodore died. Could some of the coins in the collection span three generations of the Menne family?

Not all the coins in Bill Menne's collection was valuable – in the Argus newspaper article of 1964 he mentions “another very rare coin” of his that will be put on exhibition at the 2nd Numismatic Convention in Cape Town. He described it as a gold coin featuring the head of a Portuguese King on the one side and on the other side the words in English “Thirty-six Shillings”. Menne says, “*The coin is a mystery which I hope will be solved during the conference.*”

I did some research on this piece and found that it turns out to be a brass coin weight for a Portuguese 4 Escudo. Dating from the 17th century, it is indeed old, but of little value.

Nevertheless, to have been once the owner of the unique Single Shaft Half Pond of 1892, more than makes up for whatever modest coins might have landed up in one's coin cabinet throughout the years!



Part 2

The Mystery Gets Bizarre

Following the publication of my 40-page booklet (**Part 1**) I donated copies to various friends and collectors, including the two Numismatic Societies in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Word soon reached me that a member of the Pietermaritzburg society, Professor Michael Laidlaw, was informed by Carl du Preez, the President of the Natal society based in Durban, that the Menne Half Pond had in fact never been lost in the post but that it was actually received in good order by the Durban coin dealer mentioned by Stephen Weltz. It would seem as if the full story of the missing Half Pond is even more mysterious! Du Preez recalled, as far as he could remember, that the coin was actually later lost *“in the sea somewhere between Australia and England”*. This information rather stunned me and I decided to investigate this somewhat bizarre turn of events.

Keogh Coins and the Menne Half Pond

Carl du Preez is the current owner of Keogh Coins the well-known numismatic firm based in Durban, a company which was started in the early 1970s by John Keogh. It was his company which bought the Menne Single Shaft Half Pond at the Sotheby Parke Bernet auction in April 1977. Du Preez actually started working at Keogh coins in the beginning of that year and remembers the coin well and has colour pictures of it hanging in his office up to this day. Clem van Niekerk is another person who worked with them at that time and he also remembers this very special and unique coin.



Source: Carl du Preez

Apparently four months later, in August 1977, Keogh Coins included the Half Pond in their second fixed price list of that year with a price tag of R36 000. Beautiful colour photographs of both the obverse and reverse of this unique coin set out on a red satin background were printed on the front and back pages of their fixed price sales catalogue.

To promote the sale John Keogh also included a short summary on the history and events surrounding the coin in the catalogue. However, as subsequent events turned out, the asking price of R36 000 (\$41 500) was evidently too steep, and the coin did not sell. (The coin had been bought for the amount of R24 000 only four months earlier, an amount which was then a world record price for any South African coin, but considerably less than its earlier April auction pre-sale estimate of R30 000 – R40 000, an amount which equates to well over a million Rand today).



Source: Carl du Preez

In the introduction to his August 1977 28-page fixed price list, John Keogh also proudly reported that Keogh Coins “are now the South African distributors for Spink & Son, London”, the world’s oldest coin dealers who were first established in 1666.

**The fabulous
1892 Single Shaft Half Pond**

The unique Mendi half pond, Single shaft variety.
The existence of this unique coin was not publicly known until 1906.
The reason that makes this coin so rare and of such numismatic importance is the fact that on the reverse of the coin the obverse is shown with only one shaft instead of the usual two shafts found on other coins of this year. It was universally considered that no 1892 single shaft half pond was struck out in 1892. Mr W.C. Meyer of Transvaal convinced the members of the Transvaal Numismatic Society. They and their Executive Committee examined the coin before submitting it to the Director of the South Africa Mint, and he after much research acknowledged the coin genuine.

Mr. Meyer inherited a collection of Z.A.R. coins from his father in 1906. A man named Huis father (losing the coins, and dated 1906, does not refer to the 1892 half pond and this indicates that the coin must have been added to the collection in the years between 1905 and 1906. Needless to say, his discovery generated tremendous excitement and further investigations eventually proved its authenticity.

This is the first time ever that this coin has been offered for sale on a list anywhere.

We were lucky enough to purchase this unique coin at the recent Sotobito Auction.

Whoever acquires this gem is the only person who can ever own a coin from the 1892 half pond collection.

Equivalent rarities world-wide would fetch well in the six-figure bracket. While only in 17 condition we believe that this is the best buy offered in South Africa at only R30,000 (R11,500). See photographs on the front and back covers.

A word from John Keogh

I cannot believe that six months have passed since our last price list. At this stage I would like to say thank you to all our friends and clients who made our last list almost a complete sell-out. I would like to say a particularly big "thank you" to all of you who have congratulated us on our sales and fair prices; it is most rewarding to know that our clients order with confidence.

Our big news, of course, is that we are now the South African distributors for Spink & Son, London. With the years of experience they have established 1666 and our own close watch on the international market. Four trips last year and six more spending five months in London working with Spink & Son Company and his experience with Bank Leu of Zurich we believe we can give you better advice on the international market than any other dealer in South Africa.

Remember that rare coins are becoming harder to come by and in order to sell we must BUY in, please. If you have any coins, big collections or small, we would be interested in looking them over. We will travel anywhere at short notice should the collection warrant it.


Your "heart beat" are confidentially and regularly serviced.

Please feel free to call, phone or write for any further information or advice.

I am flying to the United States at the end of August. If there is anything you particularly want, I would be delighted to look out for it for you.

Incidentally, would you please note that all the photographs in this catalogue are not necessarily to scale.

DURBAN, August 1977



Keogh Coins

Price List

**Business Hours: Monday – Friday, 9.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
2 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.
Saturday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
by prior appointment**

**Telephone: 317811, 65176 Telex: 62568 OCOINS
Home: 5568E.**

**Office: 427, S.A. Permanent Building Shop: No. 2
34 Field Street, 4 Durban Club Place
DURBAN, off Smith Street**

**P.O. Box 20331
Durban North 4016.**

COINS VIEWED BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

We want to buy choice single coins or collections

Source: Carl du Preez

According to Carl du Preez, the current owner of Keogh Coins, it was actually Spink & Son who bought the Menne Half Pond at the Sotheby Parke Bernet auction in Johannesburg. Keogh Coins merely facilitated the transaction as their South African agent. Du Preez has informed me that John Keogh was a good friend of one of the directors of Spink, the well-known Douglas Liddell who visited their premises in Durban on more than one occasion. (Liddell died in 2003 and Keogh later immigrated to Dallas, Texas in 1984.)

The Coin Gets Lost

According to Du Preez, after the unsuccessful sale of the Menne Half Pond in Durban, the coin was sent to Spink in London who presumably intended to market the Half Pond themselves. Spink subsequently exhibited this now famous and unique coin at a coin convention in Australia. The apparent loss of the coin occurred soon afterwards. While the coin was being returned by ship to England it was stolen by a passenger who was subsequently caught and apprehended. Sadly, however for South African numismatists the suspected thief tossed the coin overboard in order to get rid of the evidence.

Questions, Questions and more Questions

According to all the information we now have, especially the information and pictures provided in the Keogh price list of August 1977, we now know that the Menne Half Pond could not have been lost in the post when it was sent by Sotheby Parke Bernet Auctioneers in Johannesburg to Keogh Coins in Durban after their auction on 20 April 1977.

The question now arises. Why did Martiens van Bart, who wrote the article in the Afrikaans daily Die Burger in 2009, after his discussion with the late Stephan Weltz, state that the Half Pond was lost in the post? At the time both Martiens and Stephan were highly respected persons in their fields, and one must therefore conclude that the facts and the dates had

become confused after the long interval of 32 years Perhaps Stephan had been told that the coin was lost en-route in the post, but he could not exactly remember the details?

John Keogh and Stephan Weltz (in his day one of South Africa's top art experts and auctioneers) surely knew each other personally, as an internet source states that *"John Keogh, is not only an internationally recognized coin and banknote specialist, but also one of South Africa's most respected experts in investment quality art and old South African masters' art. With his strong links to the international art world, John has exposed some new and exciting international artists to the South African market ..."*

What Weltz may have been told by Keogh personally, was that the Menne Half Pond was indeed lost in the post, but perhaps not between Johannesburg and Durban, but at a later stage between say Durban and another destination.

Could the coin have been posted to Spink & Son in London and got lost? Or was it lost while en-route from England to Australia or vice versa?

Is it possible that the coin which was stolen and thrown overboard the ship was actually another coin (possibly also a ZAR Half Pond) but through the years, as memories fade, stories often tend to become confused and it is true that the Menne Half Pond was indeed lost in the post? (Obviously after the August sale in 1977 in Durban). There are clearly more questions which I now need to answer. Was the coin actually ever sent to Spink & Son in London and how was it transported? Was this unique and rather special coin of the ZAR series actually later exhibited in Australia? And lastly, and most importantly, have Spink retained any of their records of this coin and its subsequent loss to the numismatic world? Hopefully, if they were indeed the rightful owners of this very important coin, they have retained some records in their archives. If the story is true Spink presumably lodged an insurance claim at some stage. Perhaps Spink sold the coin and it was then lost in the post. Perhaps it was never lost at all!

Inquiries to Spink

On 31 August 2021, Professor Michael Laidlaw from Pietermaritzburg introduced me via E-Mail to Nik von Uexkull, an employee of Spink in London. I wrote to Nik and asked him to please assist me ...

“Is it possible, for someone in your administration department to check if your company lodged a large insurance claim for a very expensive South African gold coin lost in transit (The so-call single shaft “Menne” Half Pond of 1892) in the second half of 1977 or the following year 1978)? Or do you perhaps have any information at all regarding this coin? The coin was bought by the Durban based Keogh Coins who had been appointed by Spink as one their overseas distributors in that same year (1977) and was then advertised for resale later in that year. (Douglas Liddell, one of your directors at the time, was good friends with John Keogh of said company, and visited South Africa on a fairly regular basis).

The coin was not sold and was most probably returned to Spink in London and could have been lost in transit then, or later when it was apparently sent to Australia for a coin exposition, possibly the Petersham Stamp Coin & Banknote Fair held in Sydney where one of Spink’s other overseas subsidiaries, Noble Numismatics, had an office.”

Nik von Uexkull undertook to make inquiries but several follow-up attempts by me to obtain a response proved fruitless. Spink and Son were either not able or willing to help me or my requests ended up in the wrong department.

Enters John Keogh

However, on 9 September 2021, my cellphone rang and I almost jumped out of my skin – on the other side of the line was John Keogh, the numismatic dealer who bought the Menne Half Pond at the Sotheby Parke Bernet auction in Johannesburg on Wednesday 20th April 1977.



*An old picture of John Keogh, from his undated booklet, *The Coins of Rhodesia*.*

Someone had mentioned to him that I was searching for information about the coin and he contacted me. He told me that he had just been discharged from hospital but would gladly help me. After immigrating to Texas in the USA in the 1980s he later went to live and work in the Netherlands and then returned to South Africa. He now lives in Bloemfontein and is still involved in Numismatics.

Now here is the story that John told me...

He said that he was accompanied by Douglas Liddell of Spink & Son at the Sotheby Parke Bernet auction in 1977, and immediately after the auction, Liddell offered him a R2000 profit on the sale price which he accepted. (The coin therefore was not bought by Spink but by John Keogh who then sold it to Spink on the same day). Keogh and Liddell then had photographs taken of the coin (see pictures earlier) and Liddell returned to London taking the coin with him. A week or so later Douglas Liddell phoned Keogh telling him "*John, I lost the coin*" and John presumed that the coin had been lost during his flight from Johannesburg to London but

did not ask for specific details.

I asked John Keogh that if the Menne Half Pond was indeed lost soon after the sale, presumably by Liddell on his flight back to London in April 1977, how was it possible that the coin was advertised by Keogh Coins four months later in August that year being featured on the front page of their fixed price list? John Keogh responded by saying it was just for promotion purposes – the coin was indeed lost at that stage... *“We had taken pics and I had said I was going to list the coin anyway for promotion purposes ...”* (I did not him what would have happened if someone actually bought the coin at the asking price of R36 000).



Chapter 7

The Proof Half Pond of 1894



Source: *Eli Levine (1974)*

Levine (1974:75) writes that this is an unrecorded proof, similar in every respect to the ordinary coin, but struck on a proof blank. He says that the lettering on the coin is crisp and proof-like, but the coin must have gone in circulation for a short time as there are signs of wear on it. The coin was on display at the 5th South African Numismatic Convention that was held in Johannesburg in 1974. A picture of the coin is shown on page 11 of Levine's book – see above.

The coin was owned by Levine at that stage, and was included in exhibits 29 & 30 of the 1974 convention described as *Z.A.R. Coinage and Kruger Africana* by *E Levine – A Complete collection of Kruger coinage in choice condition. An 1892 Proof set and other Kruger Ephemera are also included.*



Pictures of Eli Levine showing the Prime Minister, Mr. B.J. Vorster, his collection at the 5th South African Numismatic Convention in Johannesburg in 1974 where the Half Pond was displayed.

Source: François Malan

The following year, Levine's Z.A.R. collection was auctioned off by Phoenix Postal Auctions (No.9) on the 15th of July 1975. The coin was described as follows: –



6. 1894 Half Pond. Ex Proof. Almost uncirculated, with scratches in fields. This is a great rarity. Both designs are frosted. This is the actual coin illustrated in C+C on Pages 11 (colour) and 23 and described on pages 75 of C+C as follows:

“This is an unrecorded proof, similar in every respect to the ordinary coin, but struck on a proof blank. The lettering of the coin is crisp and proof-like, but the coin must have gone into circulation for a short while as there are definite signs of wear. This coin was on display at the 5th South African Numismatic Convention”.

R1 000,00

Source: Phoenix Postal Auctions (No.9) 1975

Brian Hern (2020:14) indicates in his catalogue that a number of 3 coins are estimated in proof-like condition but as far as we can establish, none have been graded by either the Numismatic Guaranty Company or PCGS. We also have no other information on the coin, and could not find any indication that examples were sold or auctioned off after the Phoenix Postal Auction of 1975.



Chapter 8

The Blank Half Pond of 1900

An article was written in South African Numismatic Society Magazine for 1947 (page 15 & 16) entitled *The Coinage of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek* but the author is not stated. Regarding the coinage of 1901 the author notes that no actual issues were minted as the Mint was abandoned the previous year when Pretoria had been evacuated by the Boer forces, but ... *“About this time (1901) the two Blanks were used in the field. There were two types of Gold Blanks, one with the raised rim, and the other a perfectly plain rimless blank; all pounds, except for a few 10/- (half pounds)”*.

In his *The Coins of South Africa* (First edition 1950:9), Dr. Alec Kaplan records that only two copies are known and assigns a rarity score of RRRR to the coin.

However, not everyone agreed.

In the South African Numismatic Society Newsletter of March 1950 (Vol.2 of No.4) the editor, Dr. Frank Mitchell writes that when searching through old Mint records, he could not find any evidence that half-pond blanks were taken from the mint in 1900 by the Boer authorities. He says that as half-pond pieces had not been struck since 1897, it would seem most likely that any surplus (unused) blanks left over, would have been melted down as was the usual practice at the Mint and cast into bar form.

Dr. Mitchell writes *“Unless the two specimens that Dr. Kaplan refers to can be authenticated in some way, it would be ... wise not to conclude that the half-pond blanks were taken and used in the field.”* He continues *“In any case, a*

normal half-sovereign blank of the same size and weight would be practically indistinguishable from a Z.A.R. half-pond blank”.

In the next issue of the newsletter (Vol.2 No. 5) Dr. P.J. du Toit writes that Mr. Becklake has already commented on the few reputed blank half-ponde. Dr. du Toit recalls that “recently” one such blank was offered by a well-known London numismatic firm for the amount of £8.10.0. However, when he contacted the head of the firm to inquire about the coin’s authenticity, the person admitted that “*there was no positive proof that the coin in question came from the Z.A.R. mint*”.

Dr. du Toit’s mention of Mr. Becklake probably refers to J.T. Becklake’s *Notes on the Coinage of the South African Republic* (1934). He recalls receiving a “very valuable summary” by Mr. P.J. Kloppers (who was involved with the striking of the Veld Ponde) on the facts surrounding the blank ponde after they were removed from the Pretoria Mint and that Kloppers never mentioned any blank half-ponde (or blank pennies).

Becklake says that blank half-ponde have been noted once or twice only in correspondence and in the press, but he had no opportunity of inspecting them “*until recently, when I examined one in Mr. Royle Baldwin’s collection*” and says that such pieces must be very rare. He says that it is possible that a few were taken on to the veld in 1900 but it is difficult to understand as the last dated issues were struck 3 years earlier in 1897.

Dr. Mitchell, on his visit to Mr. Royle Baldwin in 1956, noted a raised rimmed blank half pond in his collection and says that Baldwin at one stage, actually owned two of these coins.

Levine (1974:75) notes that the owner of one of these coins believes that there are only three of these rarities in existence and that it is really a novel coin to see.

Matthy Esterhuysen (*Ons Gelderfenis: 1980: 38*) records that in the National Cultural Historical Museum in Pretoria (currently known as the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History) there is a small collection of Z.A.R.

blanks, being the penny, Tickey, shilling, and both the rimless and rimmed blank ponde. The other coins in the series, including the half-pond, are thus not in this collection.

In the 1980s Sam Lieberman wrote an article entitled *The History of the 7 piece Z.A.R 'Blank' coins*, a set displayed in a Perspex case.

He writes that when the gold coins were removed from the Mint during the War, some were blanks at different stages of manufacture, hence the rimmed and rimless coins. He says that only a few blank Tickeys, one sixpence, one half-crown and two gold ½ ponds with rim were minted and kept by the Mint Master, Jules Alfred Perrin. As an ex-jeweler, he says that it was Perrin who probably made the Perspex holder for the 7 piece set that consisted of the penny, Tickey and sixpence with rims, a rimless half-crown, the half pond and both the rimmed and rimless ponde. There were no shilling or two-shilling pieces in the set.

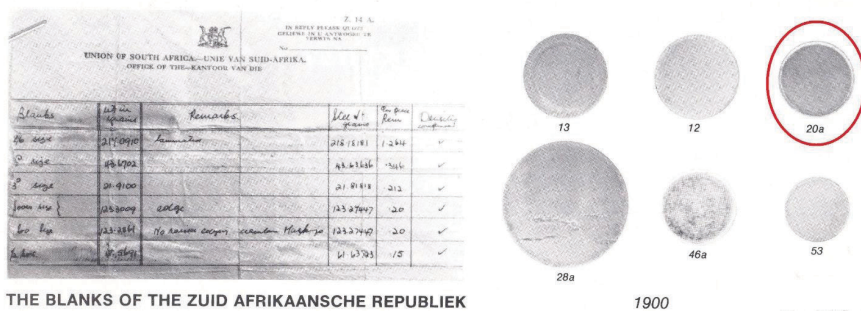
Lieberman then says that according to all his research, only 2 blank half ponde exist and they are identical. The one in the set weighs 3.99409 grams that is confirmed by an original Mint certificate. The other coin was weighed at 3.994 grams by Natalie Jaffe of City Coins in Cape Town. He says he was assured by Mr. D.G. Liddell of Spink & Sons, London, that it is identical in looks to the one in the 7 piece set

The writer asks if it is possible that both half ponde were taken by Mr. Baldwin to England – one of which was in the set of 7 blanks and the other one sold to Mr. Richard J. “Dick” Ford of the USA in June 1975 that he in turn sold through City Coins on 31 May 1985? In the catalogue, the rimmed coin, was estimated at R8 500 vs. for example, a Sammy Marks Tickey that was estimated at R8 000. The catalogue write-up says that the “Trends” catalogue of South Africa records the existence of two blank half Ponde, the example in the sale and one other.

In the first edition of Trends (1983) a picture is shown on page 20 of an undated schedule, thought to be from the 1940s, of a set of Blanks that

is said to have been assembled by Mr. Becklake. In one of the pictures (item 20a) a rimmed half pond is shown. Under remarks it is stated that a second piece without rim has been shown to the authors.

The schedule is handwritten on a document showing the official letter-head of the Union of South Africa, so the question could be asked if this set belonged to Becklake as the head of the Mint, or as a private collector? The coin denominations on the schedule are the same as those mentioned by Lieberman regarding the set in the Perspex case, except that the Penny is missing from the schedule and only 6 coins are mentioned – see picture below with the blank half pond in the top right-hand corner.



THE BLANKS OF THE ZUID AFRIKAANSCH E REPUBLIEK

1900

Source: Trends (1983)

According to Lieberman, Mr. Royale Baldwin was born in the early 1890s and came to South Africa for health reasons and stayed in the country for 4 years. There were apparently very few serious coin collectors in South Africa during that period and Baldwin was able to buy numerous rarities during the 1930s. When he returned to England he had the finest ZAR collection in the world that included the 7 piece blank set.

Baldwin must have sold the set to Mr. J.T. Becklake, as Lieberman notes that between 1942 and 1946 Dr. Alec Kaplan purchased Becklake's entire ZAR collection including the blank set.

Kaplan later sold the collection to a school teacher in Nylstroom, but kept the blank set. The teacher later sold the collection to Mr. A. Bickel, the

founder of Bickels coins in South Africa. Dr. Alec Kaplan kept the blank set in the Perspex holder until his son Stan, who took over the family coin business of Alec Kaplan and Son, advertised and sold it in 1981.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the gold Tickey of 1894 was at some time in the collection of Billy Hills. It was recently brought under my attention that an example of the blank half pond was also in Hill's collection. It was sent for grading and certification to the NGC but was not verified.



Source: Werner Lampbrecht

Just before publishing this book, we received a picture from a South African numismatist of the blank half pond (and the blank Veld Pond) from the Baldwin collection that was slabbed in 2006 by NGC.



Source: "SA Numismatist"

An internet source states that there is a blank half pond in the collection of ABSA's Money Museum in Johannesburg. The author has written to them, and received confirmation from their curator, Dr. Paul Bayliss, that they indeed have a specimen in their collection.



Chapter 9

The Proof-like Burgers Pond of 1874

Eli Levine (1974) records a proof-like Burgerspond owned then by Bernard Herring, a well-known numismatist, who is reputed to have belonged to President Burgers. A picture of the coin is shown on page 3 of his book (see below), but it is difficult to say if it is the fine or coarse beard variety.



Source: Eli Levine (1974)

Professional Coin Grading Service of America (PCGS) has graded a course beard pond with the grade SP66. (Number 560729). According to them “SP” refers to specimen or special strike which they describe as “*Struck well like a proof, but satiny, sometimes matte, semi-granular looking*”. According to Stacks Bowers Galleries, the well know US Numismatic auctioneers and dealers, SP “...*mainly refers to a finish that can’t be reconciled with (either) a Mint State or Proof status*” and that there is a “*thin line between ‘Specimen’*

and 'Proof' ..."

We wrote to PCGS requesting a picture of the coin they graded SP66, but they responded that they unfortunately do not have images of it.

Hern (2020:6) recalls seeing a "medal struck" Burgerspond with the obverse and reverse aligned the same way (as are the Krugerponde) vs. the normal Burgersponde that are "coin struck" with the obverse being upside down to the reverse. Hern says he has examined this coin and could not find any other differences compared to the normal "coin struck" coins. Could this have been a pattern for the Burgerspond?

In her book, *South Africa's First Gold Coin, research on the Burgers Dies and Burgerspond 1874*, Matthey Esterhuysen, the Transvaal Consul-General in London, J.J. Pratt was instructed by President Thomas Burgers to get some gold coins (to the same value as the English Sovereign) struck in England for the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.

The decision was made that the contract be awarded to Messrs Heaton & Sons of the Birmingham Mint with the punches to be supplied by Mr. L.C. Wyon. On 23 June 1874 Mr. Pratt asked for a proof (sample) coin before the actual striking process could begin. According to Esterhuysen's research several specimens made of various metals were sent to Mr. Pratt and received on 2 June. Arndt (1939:5) reports that Pratt acknowledged in a letter to Messrs. Heaton & Son on 2 January 1874 having received a quantity of Burger pattern pieces in bronze and silver.

It is important to note that the two issues in gold that Levine (1974:75) described under the heading *Burgers Pond Patterns* in his book are actually the normal issues copied from Becklake (1934:21) and Gordon (1960:49). Becklake (page 20) states that "...*The Burgerspond* (the normal issue in gold) *is included* (in his list of patterns) *to allow comparisons being made with the Burgers pattern pieces*".

The author can find no other references to Burgerspond patterns struck in gold, and numismatists like Van Rensburg (2003:35) mentions only

patterns in bronze and aluminum while the Numismatic Guaranty Company has only graded pond patterns in bronze, bronze-gilt and silver-gilt but not in aluminium. Hern (2020:422) records patterns struck in bronze, aluminium, silver-gilt and possible issues in brass and silver – and that the last mentioned is perhaps a forgery.



Chapter 10

The “Single 9” overstamp 1898 Pond



Source: *NGC.com*

In the South African Numismatic Society Newsletter of May 1954 (Vol.4 of No.8) the editor, Dr. Frank Mitchell reports on the “*The Palace collection of Egypt*”, the collection of the ex-King Farouk.

He draws readers' attention to lot number 902 offering a collection of 19 gold Kruger ponde, including an 1898 pond counter-marked “9” under the bust, and an “M” engraved on the bust. Dr. Mitchell is of the opinion that the coin is a forgery. The other 18 coins represented a complete set of Kruger gold coins including the double 9, the two varieties of the

blank pond and the 1902 Veld Pond. The lot of 19 coins was sold for 655 Egyptian Pounds.

The following year, a few contributors to *De Nummis*, the Journal of the Transvaal Numismatic Society (Number 1, July 1955) responded to the sale of the single “9” at the Farouk auction.

A copy of a letter by A. Graff from Johannesburg dated 1 June 1954 was published. It was addressed to Messrs. Spink & Son (Two other London firms were involved with the auction, Baldwin & Co. to describe the coins and Sotheby & Co. to publish the catalogue). Graff, regarding the authenticity of the coin, is asking Spink for a picture “*and any other information you may have about it*”. Spink’s representative D. Growther, who had examined the coin in Cairo, wrote back on 4 June that he was of the opinion that the coin is a forgery.

Another opinion in the same *De Nummis* publication was written by S. Gordon regarding the then recent sale of the coin. He says that if one considers that the value of the other 18 ponde in the lot was £350 at the most, it becomes clear that more than £300 was paid for the single 9. Gordon states that bidders must have been in possession and proof as to the validity of the coin. He says that he now has information that documents and letters exist that authenticates the coin as being struck by the Z.A.R. mint.

It thus looks as if some people at the sale were somehow assured that the coin was not a fake, while others like Spink’s Growther held the opposite view. This leads to the question if some people had “inside information” (the letters and documents Gordon refers to) while others did not?

FAROUK SALE - S. AFRICAN COINS

Messrs. Spink & Son,
Numismatic Department,
5, 6 and 7, King Street,
St. James's,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Dear Sirs,

re: FAROUK SALE — S. AFRICAN COINS.

Referring to lot 902 in above, this included a "1898 Kruger pond countermarked 9 under bust and M engraved on bust". This lot contained 19 specimens, 18 of which are well-known here and I value these at about £310. The lot was sold for £655. The buyer therefore valued the one coin referred to at about £345.

We South African collectors, have never heard of such an overstamp and are naturally very interested. At the same time we are rather suspicious of its genuineness, as knowing the value of the "99 overstamped" we check these very carefully.

Could you therefore assist us to investigate the "single 9 overstamp" by sending me a micrograph of it and any other information you may have about it.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) A. GRAFF.

A. Graff, Esq.,
P.O. Box 4147,
JOHANNESBURG,
South Africa.

5, 6 and 7, King Street,
St. James's, S.W.1.
4th June, 1954.

Dear Mr. Graff,

I thank you for your letter of the 1st June, referring to the "1898 Kruger pond, countermarked '9' under bust and 'M' engraved on bust". I examined this lot particularly in Cairo, on the instructions of several South African customers, and am of the opinion that the piece is a forgery. This opinion has been confirmed by those who subsequently attended the sale. The 9 was a large figure 9 by itself, and could have been added at a later date. The M was just scratched on by an engraving tool. We did not purchase this particular lot, and do not have access to this particular coin.

Yours sincerely, (Sgd.) D. GROWTHER (?).

THE 9 AND M COUNTERMARKED POND

Interest has been aroused at the recent sale in Egypt of the King Farouk Coin Collection. In the South African Section of Coins and Patterns, particular speculation seemed to centre round Lot 902 which fetched £655. It contained 19 Kruger ponds and half ponds, and included an 1898 pond with countermark of 9 & M under the truncation. This is an item the existence of which, I venture to suggest, no one has ever known or heard of before; it was, therefore, dismissed as a coin of no significance. Dr. Mitchell has, in fact, in his last issue of the South African Numismatic Newsletter, dismissed it as of no importance and as an obvious forgery. My question to Dr. Mitchell is: "What is it a forgery of?"

Dr. Mitchell has not taken the following factors into consideration: Lot 902, apart from the 9 & M overstruck Pond, and with the exception of the gold tickcey, contained all the Ponds and half ponds of the South African Republic between 1892 and 1902, including the 99 overstamp, the Veld Pond, the two blanks and the 1893 Half Pond. In attempting to assess these 18 items, we could not possibly price them at higher than £350 at the utmost, and, in view of the fact that the 19 coins fetched £655 it becomes obvious that more than £300 was paid for the 9 & M overstruck coin.

This is a high figure and it can be visualised that very keen bidding must have taken place, at that memorable sale, for this coin, and the bidders must have been in possession of information and proof as to the validity of this item.

Further to this, I now have information that letters and documents exist which prove that the 9 & M overstruck Pond is an actual mint-struck coin and it can be assumed as having been struck before it was finally decided to issue the 99 overstamp ponds so valuable and keenly sought after by South African Numismatists.

It may not be generally known that Lot 902 was purchased by the firm of Baldwin & Sons, of London. Mr. Royle Baldwin is a recognised authority on South African Numismatics and was responsible for compiling the Farouk Sales Catalogue. In Lot 902, the 9 & M Overstruck Pond was itemised as being of equal importance to the 99 overstamp, and Mr. Baldwin had no hesitation in stating that this coin was highly important and a unique item.

Taking all these factors into consideration, I would classify this coin as an initial striking and a probable pattern for the year 1899. It is a new and unique discovery in South African Numismatics and of great historical interest.

S. GORDON.

Source: *De Nummis*, 1 July 1955

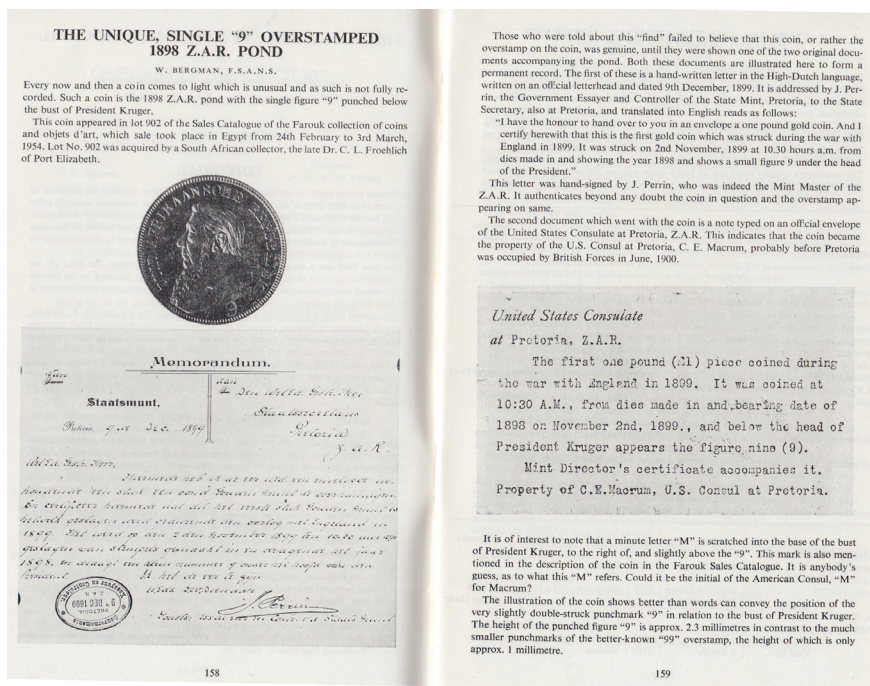
Lastly, a piece written by Isidor Kaplan was also printed in the same *De Nummis* publication. He says that he recently visited Dr. Froehlich in Port Elizabeth who showed him some of his recent acquisitions from the Farouk collection that Baldwin & Sons bought on his behalf. Kaplan states that it was his privilege to be the first to see these items as they had just arrived in South Africa.

He continues...

"The controversial M overstamp is a genuine specimen which originally came from the Pretoria Mint. All the documentary evidence accompanies this coin. The significance of this acquisition proves of enormous value to us in South Africa and I feel that Dr. Froehlich is to be complimented on his foresight in not allowing it

to be bought by a foreign collector. Further research will doubtless prove most interesting to us all."

In 1969, W. Bergman wrote a two-page article in the South African Numismatic Journal (No.5). On pages 158 and 159 a picture of the obverse of the coin is shown with the two original documents from 1899 accompanying it.



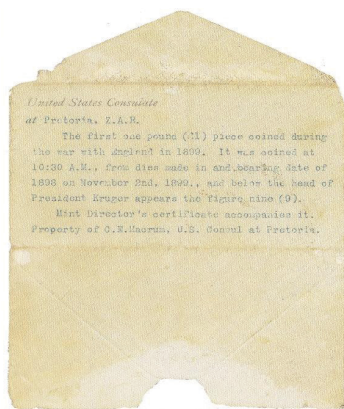
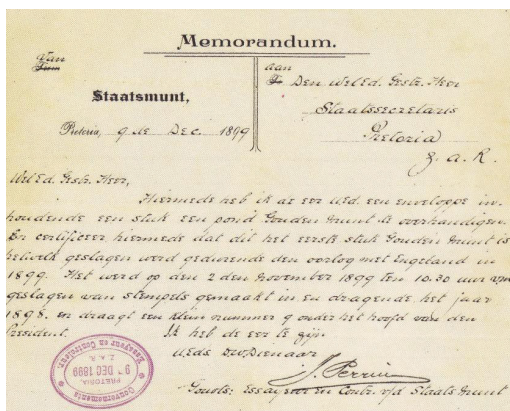
Source: W. Bergman

The first document "memorandum" is hand-written in Dutch on an official letterhead and dated 9 December 1899. It was written by the Mint Master of the Z.A.R. J. Perrin and addressed to the State Secretary of the Z.A.R., F.W. Reitz, who was also a former O.V.S. President. In his article Bergman translated the letter into English as follows: –

"I have the honour to hand over to you an envelope (holding) a one pound coin. And I certify herewith that this is the first gold coin which was struck during the war with England. It was struck on 2 November, 1899 at 10.30 hours from dies made in and showing the year 1898 and shows a small figure 9 under the head of the President."

The second document is a short note typed on an official envelope of the United States Consulate in Pretoria. It is virtually a direct translation of Perrin's document in English and ends with (The) *Mint Director's certificate accompanies it. Property of C.E. Macrum, U.S. Consul at Pretoria.*

Here are more recent pictures of the two letters.



Source: Picture on right from BidorBuy.com. Picture on the left from a Google search, but most probably from South Cape Coins, who has sold the coin twice.

Who was Macrum?

Charles Everson Macrum, was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania on 19 September 1865, and when he was fourteen years old, moved with his parents to East Liverpool, Ohio. Working first as a bookkeeper, then as a secretary of a glass company until 1897 when he joined the clerical department of the First National Bank. He remained with the bank until May 1898, when he resigned to accept appointment as the United States

Consul in Pretoria, South Africa, a year before the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War.

In December 1899 he resigned this post and returned to East Liverpool, Ohio and in July of the following year became a traveling salesman for the National Glass Company of Pittsburg. He remained with this company for about one year and then joined a real estate business in East Liverpool until January of 1903, when he became involved with the Pottery Association.

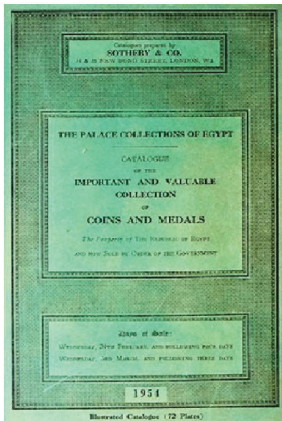
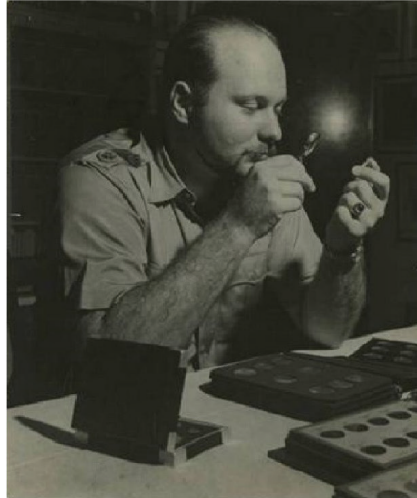
In 1890, Charles E. Macrum married Eldora (born 1866), daughter of the late Samuel McHenry. The couple had at least one daughter Natalie, born in around 1892.

It is not known if the single 9 pond was disposed of by Macrum before his death in 1943, but the coin was certainly not passed on to his wife, as she died 6 years earlier in 1937.

Several sources state that most of King Farouk's coin collection was purchased in the 1940s from American and European coin dealers. He seldom, if ever bought from private collectors, so the single 9 pond was probably either bought from a dealer who bought it from Marcum's estate after his death in 1943, or Macrum disposed the coin during his lifetime and it eventually landed up in the hands of a dealer who sold it to Farouk. The two related documents luckily never parted with the coin, and one would assume that the dealer who first bought the coin saw their relevance and understood their importance for establishing the coin's authenticity and provenance for the future.



CHARLES EVERSON MACRUM.



902** South Africa, Kruger, pond, 1892 double shafts, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1898 countermarked 9 under bust and M engraved on the bust, 1898, 99, countermarked under the bust, 1900; two Machadorp blanks, both types; Pilgrim's Rest pond, 1902, half ponds, 1892 double shafts, proof, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897. *Many extremely fine and the 1898 countermarks extremely rare.*

19

903* South Africa, Kruger, three pence, 1898 (2) in gold. *Extremely fine and very rare.*

2

904 South Africa, George V, sovereigns, first type, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928; second bust, 1928, 1929, 1931; half sovereigns, 1925, 1926, *chiefly extremely fine*; and a case containing proof set of 1923, comprising sovereign, half sovereign, silver half-crown, two shillings, shilling, sixpence, threepence, bronze penny, halfpenny and farthing.

19



902



902



903

Top left: Charles E. Macrum made the news when a congressional committee in Washington was appointed in 1900 to investigate his claims that members of the English government in Durban secretly opened American consulate letters sent from Pretoria to the USA the previous year.

Top right: King Farouk inspecting part of his vast coin collection. Sources state that the King purchased most of the coins in the 1940's when the Egyptian pound was worth much more than ever before. This allowed him to put together quite an incredible collection – in gold alone approximately 8 500 coins and medals.

Bottom left and right: The Palace Collection Catalogue 1954. The South African gold coins were divided into three lots. The pictures of the ponds and Sammy Marks Tickey are unfortunately unclear and it is difficult to see what the dates on the ponds are.

Sources: Pictures of Macrum and Farouk from Google. The author has a personal copy of the Farouk sales catalogue.

On 11 May 2010, the Numismatic Guaranty Company (NGC) announced that they have certified the coin. The caption of the announcement reads:–

Legendary South African Coin Certified by NGC – “King of South African Coins,” the unique and historic 1898 Single 9 Pond, sells for a record multi-million rand price and is certified by NGC.

The announcement is hereby printed in full, as the author wishes to respond to some of their comments – see the sections in bold below.

The sale of South Africa’s rarest and most celebrated coin, the 1898 Single 9 Pond, has been concluded for an unprecedented multi-million rand figure. The sale, like the prior two sales of the same coin, was facilitated by Mr. Walter Fivaz. The buyer, who wishes to remain anonymous, is thrilled to own such an impressive and important part of South Africa’s heritage. The Single 9 has justifiably been dubbed the “King of South African Coins” and is among the most valuable rare coins in the world.

Upon completion of the purchase, the coin was promptly sent to NGC for certification. NGC was selected for its consistent grading, extensive South African numismatic knowledge and the prestige of its certification. The coin was graded MS 63 PL by NGC. The grade of MS 63 identifies it as a choice uncirculated example. Many coins of such illustrious provenance have been mishandled, and fortunately this coin has retained its original surface quality. Additionally, the fields of the coin are mirror-like, indicating that it was struck from freshly polished dies. Accordingly, it has been designated PL, for proof-like, which is assigned to coins that possess some of the special attributes often seen on presentation coinage.

“We are very proud to certify such an important and historic coin. Seldom does a coin play so significant a role in cultural history, and for many years this coin has been considered the most coveted of all coins struck on the African continent,” commented Ken Krahn, NGC vice president, who heads NGC’s World coin grading department. The details surrounding the creation of the Single 9 Pond

form one of the most compelling stories in numismatics. The Single 9 was the first one-pound gold coin produced during the Anglo-Boer War between South Africa and the British Empire in 1899. At that time, the government of the South African Republic sought legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. One of the best ways to do this was to manufacture their own coins and currency. Since they did not have a facility to produce dies for coinage in South Africa, the government contracted with a mint in Germany to create dies for 1899 coinage. En route from Germany to the Transvaal, the shipment of dies was intercepted and seized by the British.

Still wanting to press forward on making their own coins, the government's solution was to use dies from 1898 and punch a 9 on the obverse of the 1898-dated coins. Once the first coin was made, they realized that the 9 was too large — it intruded on the bust of President Kruger. Only this first single coin was made with this punch, and all subsequent coins struck on this occasion were stamped with a pair of smaller nines. This second striking of coins is called the double 99 overstamp, and also comprises a rare and valuable South African coin; the single 9 stamp is unique.

The first coin, the Single 9, was immediately given to the United States Consul General, C.E. Macrum, as a means of confirming the South African Republic as an independent country with its own currency. Two pieces of correspondence concerning this event, one written by the government assayer at the time, J. Perrin, and the other by Macrum himself, still accompany the coin today. **Macrum also had a small letter “M” engraved onto the coin, on the truncation of Kruger’s bust, as a permanent marker of its provenance.**

NGC’s attribution for this coin includes the notation “‘M’ Monogram.” Although **the coin was marked post-striking by its first owner**, the monogram was not factored into the grade assigned. “This is standard practice when grading coins with historically important post-minting marks,” explained Krahn. “Marks such as these actually help pedigree a coin. We believe that the Macrum mark on the

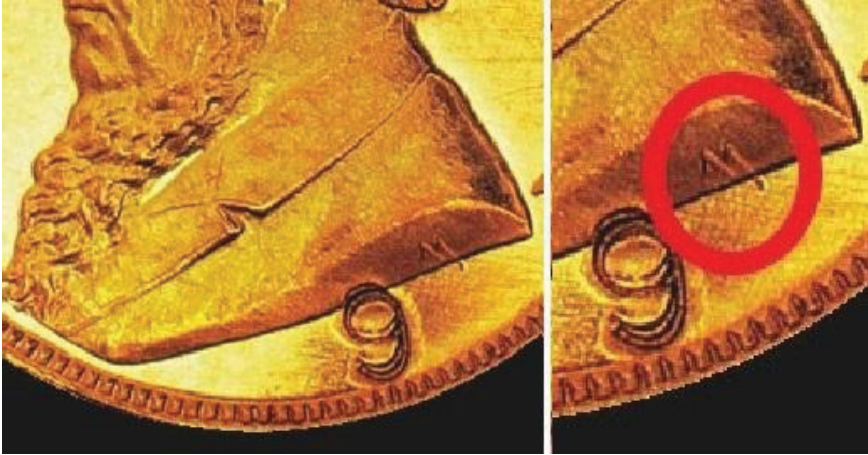
base of the bust on the single 9 pond clearly falls into this historically significant category.”

*The full pedigree of the coin is glamorous and very interesting. After Macrum took possession of the coin it is hard to trace, until the auction of the “Palace Collections of Egypt” in 1954, the collection assembled by King Farouk of Egypt. **In the catalog it is noted that he procured the coin in Paris some years before.** The coin was auctioned off with 18 other South African coins from the King’s enormous collection. Baldwin’s of London bought it on behalf of Dr. Froelich from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, for a sum of 655 Egyptian pounds.*

The coin then remained in South Africa. The next time the coin appeared in public sale was in the Days Postal Auction No. 9 in 1969, where it sold for R2 530. In 1983 it came up for auction again through the Phoenix Postal Auction No. 30. Then it sold for R132 000. In 1999, the centenary year of the Anglo-Boer War, the coin was sold privately by dealer Walter Fivaz on behalf of Mr. Kraay for R4.65 million. Shortly thereafter, in 2001, it was again sold privately for R9.8 million. This current sales price, although undisclosed, reportedly places this coin squarely on the roster of highest-value rare coin transactions.

Our comments: There is no evidence that the letter “M” was added to the coin because of a request by Macrum, or that it refers to the first letter in his surname. It just as well could have indicated that the coin was struck by the “Munt” (the Dutch word for Mint) in Pretoria. For all practical purposes it could also have been added many years later as the first known document referring to it (the “M”) was the Farouk Sales Catalogue for the Cairo auction more than half a century after the coin was struck.

Regarding the statement by the NGC that the coin was according to the sales catalogue purchased by King Farouk in Paris some years before the sale: We have studied the original catalogue but can find no reference to this assumption.



Source: *South Cape Coins*

The only time the catalogue refers to the past purchasing of (any) coins offered, is in the Introduction where it says “*Many of the coins come from famous collections. Much of the very complete series of the United States of America issues are from the famous W.H. Woodin, H.B. Earle and Col. Green collections, whilst the equally famous Ferrari collection was the source of many examples in the French section*”.

(King Farouk was 2 years old when the Ferrari collection was sold in the early 1920s).

In any case, why would the catalogue specifically refer to the provenance of the single 9 if it was part of a lot (number 902) of 18 other coins?

In his recently published work *The Anglo-Boer War 963 Days: Maps, Stats & Facts*, Pieter G. Cloete, on page 60 noted that the single 9 was presented “*with pomp and ceremony*” to Macrum in 1899 and that some of the double 9 coins were awarded to other diplomatic missions in the ZAR. The author made an enquiry to Cloete regarding his source or sources in this regard. He acknowledged receiving our first letter (e-mail), but we unfortunately did not hear from him again.

Becklake (1934), however, indeed says that he had been reliably informed that when the coins were overstruck, several well-known persons were present at the historic occasion to mark the war-time reopening of the mint for gold coinage.

If one looks at Mint Master Perrin's statement that the single nine was the first coin struck on 2 November 1899 from the 1898 dies, one will notice that the time and day refer to the striking of the coins themselves and not when the "9" was actually punched. When the single figure 9 was added and deemed to be insufficient, the punch for the double 9 was most probably not immediately available. So the ceremony for the punching of the rest of the coins with the double 9, probably occurred at a later date. Who the well-known persons at the ceremony were we do not know, but the German Consulate General during the war, Max Biermann, was probably present as he knew the foreman of the Mint, Mr. A. Hermanus, personally.

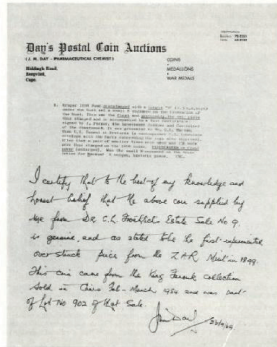
Becklake (1934) provides information that Biermann in November 1901, authenticated the signature of Hermanus that was on a certificate relating to a double 9 pond belonging to a coin collector. Hermanus in his signed declaration states that "*... it is one of those I as foreman struck personally on the order of the Mint Master.*"

The chronological sales history of the coin is as follows: -

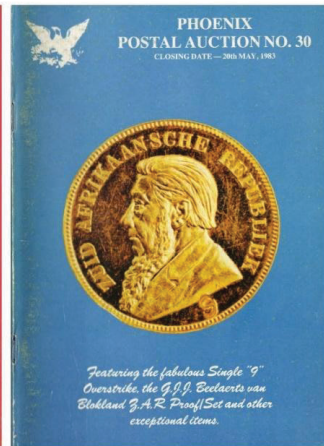
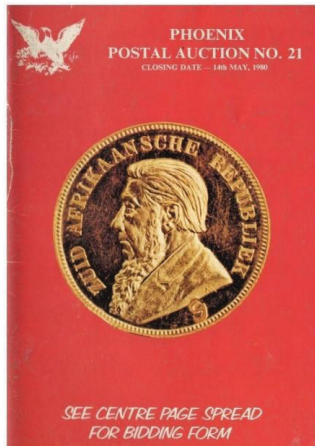
Year	Sale	Price	Estimated value in today's terms (2022)
1954	King Farouk Sale	Bought for 655 Egyptian pounds as part of a lot by Dr. Froelich, a South African. The value of the single 9 was estimated at approx. 350 Egyptian pounds (or 360 British Pounds).	R74 000
1969	Days Postal Auction No. 9	R2 530	R202 000
1980	Phoenix Postal Auctions No.21	R45 000. Some references state that the buyer was a Dr. Fourie from South Africa.	R1 240 000
1983	Phoenix Postal Auction No. 30	R132 000. The buyer was Mr. Kraay.	R2 450 000
In August 1998, Coins News, published by Token Publishing Limited in the U.K., reported that it is understood that the coin was on the market for the sum of R7 million.			
1999	Sold privately by dealer Walter Fivaz (South Cape Coins) on behalf of Mr. Kraay	R4 650 000	R14 620 000
2001	Sold privately	R9 800 000	R27 680 000
2010	Sold privately by dealer Walter Fivaz (South Cape Coins)	"Almost" R20 000 000	R35 760 000

Source: Francois Malan

The certificate issued by Mr. Day, one of South Africa's best known and most highly respected Numismatists is reproduced below.



On the left is a signed letter by Day's Postal Auctions authenticating the coin as belonging to Dr. Froelich (ex. Farouk) which was sold by them in 1969. The other two pictures are of the Phoenix catalogues that listed the coin in 1980 and 1983.



Skaarsste muntstuk vir byna R20 m. verkoop

PHILIP DE BRUN
Kaapstad

Stuid-Afrika se skaarsste en mees waardevolle muntstuk, die goudse eendpund-munt van 1899 met die "verkeerde 9" waarvan net een bestaan, is vir dieby R20 miljoen verkoop.

Daar bestaan nog ander goue ponde van 1899, maar hierdie een is die enigste waarvan die laaste syfer 9 groter is as die eerste 8.

Die het gebeur omdat die pons wat gebruik is om die tweede syfer 9 op die heel eerste muntstuk aan te bring, te groot was. Dit het tot oor die gesig van pres. Paul Kruger gestrek en die destydse regering het besluit dat 'n klein-er-er-9 pons op die daaropvolgende muntstukke gebruik moet word.

Daar is dus net een muntstuk met die "verkeerde" 9 vervaardig. In daardie jare was die Anglo-Boere-oorlog aan die gang en wou die destydse Stuid-Afrikaanse regering legitimiteit in die Internasionale gemeenskap se oë verkry.

Dit is met die doel dat besluit is om die goue ponde te vervaardig. Die go-



Die waardevolste muntstuk in Suid-Afrika, die heel eerste goue eendpund-munt van 1899 met 'n verkeerde 9 op.

skiedenis dra by tot die muntstuk se historiese waarde. Die muntstuk met die verkeerde 9 is

deur die destydse regering aan mr. C.E. Macrum, konsul-generaal van die VSA in Suid-Afrika, geskenk. Die eerste wat woor daarvan getoets is, was in 1954 tot die op 'n veiling van koning Farouk van Egipte van sy waardevolle munte bekend het.

Ene dr. Froelich van Port Elizabeth het die munt vir R55 Egiptiese pond gekoop. Daarna is die muntstuk in 1980 op 'n veiling vir R2 530 verkoop. In 1983 is dit weer op 'n veiling vir R232 000 verkoop.

In 1999, met die eeufoerfeviering van die oorlog, is die muntstuk deur die oenar van South Cape Coins, mr. Walter Fivaz, vir R4,65 miljoen van die hand gesit. Net twee jaar later is dit weer verkoop, dit keer vir R9,8 miljoen.

Mrs. Delucia Swanepoel van South Cape Coins, wat ook die jongste transaksie hanter het, het gesê die munte-eienaar wil anoniem bly.

Sy het bevestig dat die munt in Stuid-Afrika bly.

Daar is betroubaar verneem dat die jongste koopparty byna dubbel die vorige pryis van R9,8 miljoen is.

Kruger-pond vir meer as R9 miljoen verkoop

Die 200 "High 9" Krugerpund met die R9,8 miljoen verkoop.

SA coin sold for millions

By STEVE VAN DER WAL

It was the first time the 1898 S. Africa Gold Standard Single 9 gold coin was sold for more than R9 million. The coin, which is the only one of its kind, was sold for R9,8 million at an auction in Cape Town on Tuesday.



The coin was sold for R9,8 million, which is more than double its previous record price of R4,65 million.

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Source: Author's personal library

South African news reports of the sale of the coin in 2001 and 2010

As a final observation: If one looks closely at the punched figure "9" on the single 9 pond, it is clear that it is double struck – not the same as the

double 9 issue where the two figures are clearly apart – but one 9 punched virtually on top of the second punched 9. The reason for this is unknown.



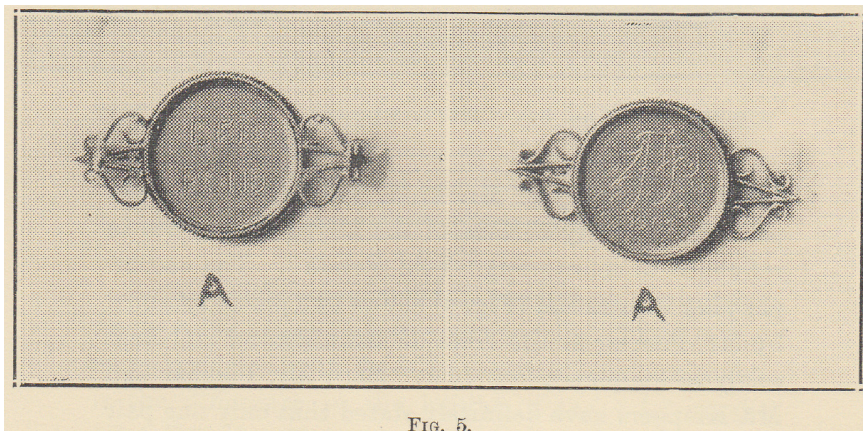
Chapter 11

The Veld Pond Pattern of 1902

In J.T. Becklake's *Notes on the Coinage of the South African Republic* (1934: 10) he says that prior to the final approval of the pair of dies actually accepted for the striking of the Veld Ponde, another pair of dies was used but was not accepted.

“Mr. Pienaar retained one test piece only, struck from the original pair of dies – all the other test pieces and the dies themselves were then destroyed. This interesting and unique piece is illustrated in Fig.5. It will be acknowledged that the later dies were greatly superior in design and artistic merit to the earlier pair tested...”

(Veldkornet A. Pienaar was a member of the “Staatsmunt te Velde” the team responsible for minting the Veld Ponde in 1902).



Source: J.T. Becklake

Here is the picture as shown in Becklake's booklet.

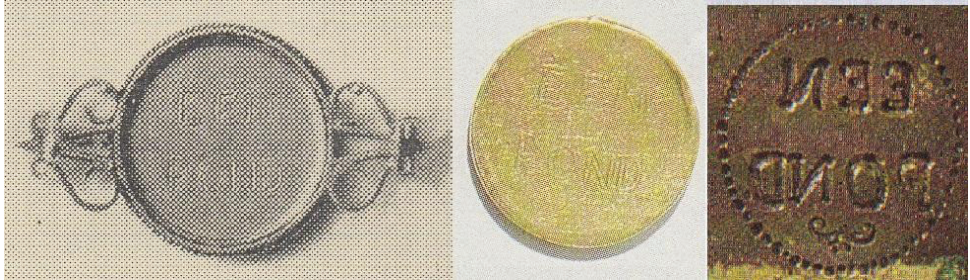
Unfortunately, the picture is not very clear but it shows the coin to be mounted in a brooch. Fortunately it seems like the coin is not soldered into the brooch as both sides are shown with the pin at the back, so the coin must have been taken out to take the second picture.

Engelbrecht (1987:81 – 83) reports that after the Boer War, a photo album with English and Dutch captions was published under the title *Photos of the Boer Commandos taken at Pilgrim's Rest by Alex Marshall during the War*. The first page of Marshall's book is reproduced in Engelbrecht's book with more modern pictures in color superimposed on the original black and white background. Engelbrecht says that in the picture, the item in color in the upper left hand corner is the "real gold pattern pound" (The coin on its right in the original picture is a "normal" Veld Pond and not the pattern).

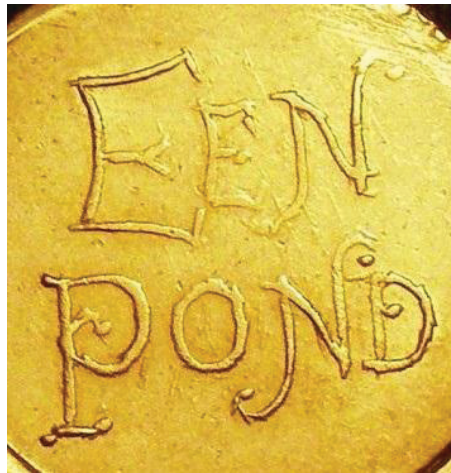


Source: C.L. Engelbrecht

On closer inspection we found that it is indeed the same coin shown in Becklake's booklet on the left of the following picture. The picture on the right is the engraving on the copper plate also shown in the picture above. The letters spelling EEN POND are much simpler than the final product with its more intricate design shown in the second picture below.



Source: *J.T. Becklake and C.L. Engelbrecht*



Source: *BidorBuy.com*

The copper plate in Marshall's picture shown in Engelbrecht's book (both in black & white and color) was a copper ruler used in the workshop and on which the design for the pattern coin is engraved. At the 6th Numismatic Convention in Durban in July 1976, Mr. W. Makepeace exhibited this piece

as part of exhibit 84 which is described as “... *various extremely rare Burger Pattern Pieces together with the Veld Pond, forgeries, Trial Die in brass, Trefoil and cufflinks and studs of Alex Marshal – one of the moneyers at Pilgrams’s Rest*”.

Marshall, although a photographer, is thought to have assisted in the minting process by helping to obtain gold remnants and equipment from the mines. The “trefoil” mentioned as being part of the exhibition of Mr. W. Makepeace at the convention, was without doubt one of the few gold medals that was awarded by the ZAR Government to Marshall and other team members who are also shown in the picture.

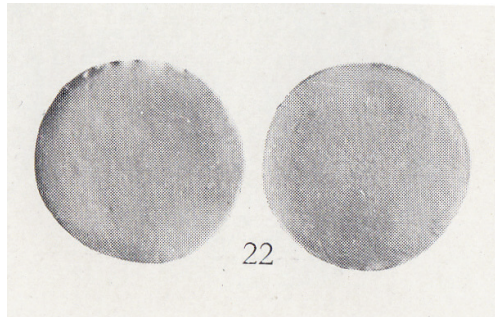
In her research on the Veld Pond, Dr. Rentia Landman-Reid (2013) mentions that according to Anna H. Smith (*Africana Notes and News* March 1976 Volume 22 No 1) W Makepeace, the owner of exhibit 84 in Durban that year, bought Marshall’s souvenirs.

Although Becklake states that only one test piece, the pattern in gold, survived after Pienaar destroyed the others, it looks like some impressions in lead did actually survive – see 3 examples shown in the top right hand corner of Engelbrecht’s picture. According to Landman’s research, Marshall got the copper piece imprinted with the proof dies and Field Cornet Pienaar the lead proof pieces, which they kept as souvenirs. Some of these items are apparently in the ABSA coin collection in Johannesburg. The author has written to them asking about the gold pattern. The curator, Dr. Paul Bayliss, responded that the pictures we sent him, look familiar, but later confirmed that the piece was not in their museum.



Chapter 12

The Blank Veld Pond of 1902



Source: J.T. Becklake (1934)

As mentioned earlier in this book, included in *Africana Notes and News* (June 1960, Vol. 14 No. 2) is an article entitled *Notes on the South African Patterns in the collection of W.V. Royle Baldwin, ESQ., of West Worthing, Sussex*. On page 63, item 22 is described as follows: -

Z.A.R. 1902. Flan (planchette) prepared for striking. Edge filed to weight. Diameter 0.87 inches; Thickness 0.05 inches. Weight 124.4 grains (8.06 grams). Z.A.R. Een Pond 1902. From Colonel Stericker, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 1938, along with two original Z.A.R. Een Pond 1902 and some Kruger gold. Believed unique. A picture of a plaster cast of the coin is shown.

Dr. F.K. Mitchell, records seeing the coin on his visit to Baldwin in 1956 and describes it as follows:—

Blank "Veld" Pond. This is no ordinary blank pond – apart from the absence of obverse and reverse inscriptions, this piece has all the characteristics of the Z.A.R.

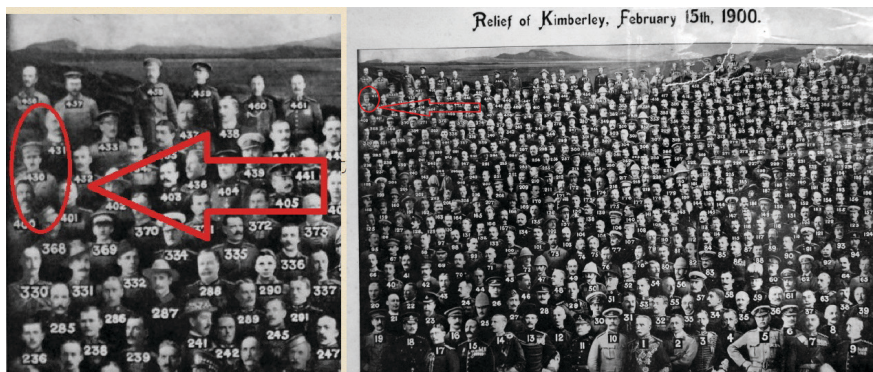
“Een Pond” of 1902.

Levine (1974: 76) and Hern (2020:442) record the same coin, but it is without doubt based on the description provided in the article in *Africana Notes and News* in 1960 by S. Gordon.

Who was its one-time owner, Colonel Stericker?

According to lightinfantry.org.uk and other internet sources, Arthur William Stericker (1879 -1971) arrived in Table Bay on November 29th 1899 as a 2nd lieutenant in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. On 17 January 1901 (later backdated to 15 December 1900) he was promoted to full lieutenant.

He was involved in operations at the relief of Kimberley and his picture is number 430 indicated in the red circle in the top left corner.



Source: angloboerwar.com

Unfortunately, we could not find much information on Stericker's service during the Boer War (besides the fact that he was mentioned in dispatches). One would have liked to know if he served in the Eastern Transvaal during the period that the Veld Ponde were minted, as units of his regiment, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, did indeed serve there as angloboerwar.com says...

After Pretoria was occupied the 19th Brigade was taken from Ian Hamilton, and

with their brigadier were employed on the line between the Vaal and the capital. On 10th July Smith-Dorrien was ordered to rail the Shropshires and Gordons to Krugersdorp to collect supplies, but ten miles from that town the enemy was found to be too strong, and Smith-Dorrien had to return to Krugersdorp, in which neighborhood he operated for some weeks. The Cornwalls were for a time at Irene and afterwards at Derdepoort. At the end of August the battalion was taken east to Middelburg, remaining there till 1st December, when they were dispatched to the Pienaar's Poort district. In July and August 1901 they furnished four companies for Major General Beatson's column. In August the battalion was taken to the unhealthy Koomati Poort valley, and they remained in that district and at Barberton till the close of the war.

If Stericker obtained the blank Veld Pond and the other Kruger coins in his collection during the Boer War, it must have been in his possession until 1938 when it was purchased by Mr. Royle Baldwin. As a matter of fact, it is known that some British soldiers actually collected Z.A.R. coins during the war, either as mementos or numismatic collectables. In part 11 of *With the Flag to Pretoria* covering January 1900, a picture of a set of "Transvaal" coins is shown stating that an artificial value is attached to some of them on account of very limited numbers that were issued. Soldiers were thus willing to pay more for some of the coins than their actual face value.



TRANSVAAL COINS.

The illustration shows the reverse side of some of the Transvaal coins. The head of President Kruger (as below) appears on the obverse of each. An artificial value attaches to some of them on account of the very limited number issued.

Source: *With the Flag to Pretoria 1900*

Just before publishing this book, we received a picture from a South African numismatist of the blank Veld Pond (and the blank Half Pond) from the Baldwin collection that was slabbed in 2006 by NGC.



Source: "SA Numismatist"



Chapter 13

Conclusion

We have given an account of the recorded history of 10 gold coins of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek in this book. All the coins are either unique or nearly so with none known or reported to have more than 3 examples in existence. Numismatists rank this level of rarity with terms like “RRRR”, “R8” and “URS 3”.

Of our first coin, the **gold Tickey of 1894**, two examples are known, the first housed in the SA Mint Museum, and the second piece graded by the NGC and in the hands of a private collector. There is a possibility that a third coin exists.

The second coin, the **gold sixpence of 1897** is a unique coin, also graded by the NGC and in the hands of a private collector.

Regarding the **gold Half Crown of 1892**: This unique coin's past is well recorded, but neither a picture of it, nor its current ownership are known to us. It is not graded by either the NGC or PCGS. There is a possibility that a second coin exists.

The “Menne” **single shaft Half Pond of 1892** is considered by most numismatists as an authentic coin, but it was lost in 1977 and never appeared again.

Of the **proof (or proof-like) Half Pond of 1894** little is known. Although Hern is of the opinion that 3 coins exist, none have been graded by either the Numismatic Guaranty Company or PCGS, and their current ownership is not known to us.

Past references to the **blank Half Pond of 1900** are not all in agreement. The number mentioned are usually two in existence but one source states there are three. Most sources agree on the coins being of the rimmed variety, but one source says a rimless example does exist. At least one specimen is certified by the NGC.

A unique **proof-like coarse beard Burgerspond of 1874** is graded by PCGS, but they are unable to provide a picture of it.

The provenance and sales history of the unique “**Single 9**” **overstamped pond of 1898** are well recorded and the coin is certified and graded by the NGC in MS 63 PL condition.

The **Veld Pond Pattern of 1902** is known to exist but its current ownership is not known to us.

A picture of the **Veld Pond blank of 1902** exists and a leading numismatist of his day, Dr. Frank Mitchell, who inspected the coin in person in 1956, was of the opinion that it shows the characteristics of the normal (struck) Veld Pond. A specimen is certified by the NGC.



Acknowledgements

We have received inputs and suggestions for this book by various numismatists to whom we are very grateful. Some have asked their names to be kept anonymous, so we have decided to rather keep all anonymous. A big thank you to all.

However, as they have passed on years ago, the author would like to acknowledge the enormous contribution of three persons to South African numismatics that he has never met. Their names feature regularly in this book, and without their contributions to our numismatic heritage and knowledge, this publication would have been simply impossible to write.



Mr. James Thomas Becklake (born 1880) was the last Deputy of the Royal Mint, Pretoria, and first Director of the South African Mint. Although he wrote a book on South African coinage after his retirement from the Mint, it was his earlier numismatic writings on ZAR coins and patterns that were invaluable to our research.



Mr. William Victor Royle Baldwin (1893–1967), a British numismatist who was not only partner in one of Britain's most respected coin dealerships in his time, but also assembled a matchless private cabinet of many of the rarest and earliest trial pieces of South Africa. It is well recorded that he was always willing to allow South African numismatists to inspect and record this collection.



(The picture on the left was taken of his father, Albert Henry, in front of the old Baldwin's shop)

Dr. Frank Mitchell (1918–1991), who during his lifetime recorded for posterity, his and fellow numismatists' vast knowledge of South African coinage in articles, newsletters and other publications. He will always be in our view, the doyen of South African numismatics during the previous century.



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South African Numismatic Society Magazine for 1947

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In 2021 the author published a small booklet entitled The Menne Single Shaft Paul Kruger Half Pond of 1892 – The story of a mysterious and unique gold coin.

It tells the story of a unique gold coin which was sold at auction in Johannesburg in 1977 for a then world record price for a South African coin. After the sale, the coin was apparently lost in transit, never to appear again. Following the publication of his booklet, word reached the author that the coin had in fact not been lost but that it was indeed received by the Durban coin dealer who bought it. Only thereafter was it lost.

After further research, the author wrote a follow up on his initial booklet and decided to incorporate it as a chapter in a new book on “all” the known unique and very rare gold coins of the ZAR.

Regarding these coins, 10 in total, there are differences of opinion on the number of each that exists. Some are clearly unique such as the single 9 over-stamped Pond of 1898 while others are only believed to be unique with none thought to have more than three in existence.

The value of most of these coins are estimated at millions of Rands, but the current ownership and whereabouts of some of them are not known and remains a total mystery to this day.

This book describes these ten rare gold coins of the ZAR and is an important new addition to the South African numismatic literature.

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