



Top: Burgers pond, thin beard, obverse and reverse **Centre:** Krugger 5 shilling, 1892 - wagon with two shafts **Foot left:** Krugger pond, 1892, with initials OS on bust **Foot centre:** Krugger gold 3 pence, 1898 **Foot right:** Krugger pond 1898, over stamped '99'

Coins of the South African Republic *M. B. Chapman*

A brief history of the South African Republic

The exodus of about 10 000 Dutch colonists from the eastern districts of the Cape Colony, known as the Great Trek, began in 1835. The Voortrekkers, as those emigrants were called, settled in what today are the Orange Free State, Natal and the Transvaal. The first settlement north of the Vaal was at Potchefstroom on the Mooi River. Other towns were founded at Schoemansdal, Ohrigstad and Lydenburg, etc. After Britain had annexed Natal in 1843 and proclaimed the Orange River Sovereignty in 1848, many of the Voortrekkers who had been living in those territories trekked to the Transvaal. Andries Pretorius, the hero of Blood River, was amongst them. The settlements north of the Vaal remained independent of one another until 1860, when they all recognised Martinus Wessels Pretorius, the son of Andries, as the president of the South African Republic or Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, as it was called. In his efforts to unite the two Trekker Republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, Pretorius became president of the Free State, but had to resign from the presidency of the Northern Republic. In 1864 he returned to the Transvaal and remained president until 1871 when he was forced to resign.

He was succeeded in 1872 by Thomas Francois Burgers, a former predikant or minister of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape Colony. For various reasons Burgers became unpopular in the South African Republic and, when Britain annexed the Republic in 1877, he made a formal protest and retired to the Cape. In 1881 the burghers of the Transvaal fought the First War of Independence and, after defeating the British at Majuba, were given back their independence in a modified form. For a time the old South African Republic was known as the Transvaal State. In 1883 Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger was elected as president and in the following year the Transvaal was allowed to call itself the South African Republic once more. Kruger was elected as president on three more occasions and was in office when the South

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African War or Second War of Independence broke out in 1899 between Britain and the South African Republic and her ally the Orange Free State. Kruger went to Europe in 1900 to secure aid for his country and he died in Switzerland in 1904. In 1902 when the war ended the two former Republics became British Colonies known as the Transvaal and Orange River Colony respectively. In 1910 these two colonies united with the Cape Colony and Natal to form the Union of South Africa.

As I shall be using a few numismatic terms, I thought it would be best to explain them.

Obverse

The obverse of a coin is the *face-up* side of the coin, regarded as more important than the other side or *reverse*. The obverse usually bears the portrait of the monarch. In USA coinage the side with the date is regarded as the obverse.

Die

A die is a piece of hard metal engraved with the design of the obverse or reverse of a coin so that the design can be stamped on to the flan.

Flan or Blank

A flan or blank is the unstuck plain disc of metal which will become the coin.

Pattern Coins

Pattern as the name implies refers to a design submitted for a new coinage. Pattern coins are trial pieces which were not accepted for coinage.

Proof Coins

Proof coins are coins with mirror-like surfaces struck from highly polished discs on polished blanks. These coins are minted for collectors and are never intended for circulation.

Milled Edge

A milled edge is an edge protected with grooves known as graining, now called milled.

The Burgers Staatspond or Sovereign

To President Burgers belongs the honour of introducing the first ZAR

coinage. After the discovery of alluvial gold at Pilgrim's Rest in 1873, Burgers sent a quantity of nuggets to the Transvaal Consul-General in London, Mr J. J. Pratt, who was instructed to have coins made from this Transvaal gold of the same value and gold content as the British sovereign. A portrait of the President, a sketch of the way in which the sovereigns had to be designed, several copies of the Republican coat-of-arms and instructions as to wording were also sent. Mrs Burgers, who was in England at the time, lent Mr Pratt two photographs of her husband. Using dies which had been specially engraved by L. C. Wyon, engraver at the Royal Mint, Messrs Heaton and Sons of Birmingham manufactured 837 Burgers staatsponde or pound pieces. Patterns struck in bronze and aluminium had been submitted by Messrs Heaton to Mr Pratt, who was responsible for the final choice. The first 695 pieces were struck with a single pair of dies, after which the obverse die broke, and the final 142 pieces were struck with a new obverse die, but with the same reverse die, as a result of which there are two varieties of Burgers sovereigns, known as the *thin beard* and the *coarse beard*. The following is a description of the *thin beard*:

Obverse; profile head of the President facing left, with *Thomas Francois Burgers* surrounding it and the date *1874* below the truncation.

Reverse; Transvaal coat-of-arms surrounded by the inscription *Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek*. The *coarse beard* differs from the above in that the points of the beard are coarser and the 8 in the date appears to be double struck. The edges of the coins are milled.

The coins were eventually declared legal tender in the ZAR and were distributed to each member of the Volksraad or legislative body, in payment of his first day's work in the session of 1874. The President was given one of the first strikings and the balance, Mr Becklake says, was paid out, it is believed, to favoured creditors of the Government. Mr Arndt states that Mr Pratt kept four of the coins, twenty-four were distributed to members of the Volksraad, one was presented to the President, Heads of Powers which had acknowledged the independence of the ZAR were each given one, and the remainder were bought by Government officials and members of the public. Many of these pieces have been holed or mounted so that specimens in a perfect condition are rare and fetch high prices today.

It has been stated that Burgers had these coins minted in order to impress the Volksraad with the importance of the country's wealth and to gain popularity. His action, however, aroused criticism, his critics objecting to the cost of production of the coins (Mr Becklake accepts an assertion that it was twenty-six shillings for one pound) and to his

likeness appearing on the coin. He was accused not only of vanity but of breaking the second commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything. . . As a result of this opposition, Burgers did not carry out his intention to introduce a full series of coins. It is believed that at a later date he ordered a plant for a mint, but that it was left to rust at the port of entry.

Specimens are known of some five of the pattern coins presented to Mr Pratt as well as patterns for various Burgers pieces of different denomination, which are thought to have been made by Otto Nolte and Company of Berlin.

Kruger Coins

After the discovery of gold in Barberton in 1883 and on the Witwatersrand in 1886, many people flocked to the South African Republic and a period of economic expansion followed. President Kruger felt the need for a coinage system for the ZAR. Accordingly the National Bank of the ZAR in return for a banking concession, agreed to establish a mint and to manufacture coins for the Government ranging in value from one penny to a pound. The foundation stone of the mint was laid by Kruger in 1892. Although machinery and coinage dies had been ordered from Germany, Kruger, anxious to have the coins in circulation before the presidential election of 1893, asked the Royal Prussian Mint in Berlin to strike a number of coins. In 1892 the first consignments consisting of gold ponde and half ponde and silver five shilling pieces arrived and were quickly put into circulation. Great was the consternation amongst Kruger's supporters when they discovered that the wagon on the coat-of-arms on the reverse of all three denominations had two shafts instead of the single pole of the South African wagon, and that the front wheels, instead of being smaller than the back wheels, were of the same diameter. To make matters worse the initials OS of the engraver of the dies, Otto Schultz, were placed on the truncation of the bust of Kruger on both gold pieces. OS means ox in Dutch and Kruger's opponents were quick to say that their candidate could easily beat the *ox* Kruger. As many of the offending coins as possible were withdrawn from circulation and melted down, together with those coins that had not yet been issued. Berlin was promptly informed of the mistakes and the errors were rectified. It is interesting to note that in 1892, 227 464 pieces, including all denominations of the Kruger coinage from one penny to the pound, were struck in Berlin.

Although the Pretoria Mint was opened in 1892, it struck only florins and shillings that year. The first single-shafted pond dated 1892 was

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struck in Pretoria in 1893 and the first single-shafted half-pond dated 1893 was struck in 1894 and the first single-shafted five shilling piece dated 1892 was struck in 1893. No five shilling pieces were struck again. It is believed that no single-shafted half-pond bearing the date 1892 was struck and yet Mr W.J.C. Menne of Louis Trichardt had one in his possession which appears to be a genuine Kruger coin.

Coins of the following denominations and bearing the dates indicated were struck by the Pretoria Mint before it was closed for a period of twenty-one months from the beginning of 1898:

- pounds, 1892-1897 (inclusive);
- half-pounds, 1893-1897 (inclusive);
- crowns, 1892;
- 2½ shillings, 1892-1897 (inclusive);
- 2 shillings, 1892-1897 (inclusive);
- 1 shilling, 1892-1897 (inclusive);
- 6 pence, 1892-1897 (inclusive);
- 3 pence, 1892-1897 (inclusive);
- 1 penny, 1892-1894 (inclusive).

No double-shafted coins were struck at the Pretoria Mint.

Between 1899 and 1900 almost a million gold ponde were minted bearing the date 1898 or 1900. The 1899 ponde were struck with dies prepared for 1898, as the 1899 dies never reached Pretoria, having been seized in Lourenco Marques. However, 130 of the ponde dated 1898 were over stamped 99 below the head on the obverse side to mark the re-opening of the Mint. These coins are very scarce today. Bronze pennies dated 1898 were also struck during this period.

From 1892 to July 1900 it is estimated that the Pretoria Mint struck approximately just over eight million pieces.

The 1892 series included some special sets of proof coins struck in Berlin with polished dies from polished blanks for all denominations. Other proof coins are known. Mr M.W.W. Royle Baldwin had a proof half-crown in copper, with a plain edge, dated 1892 and a sixpence in copper with a plain edge and a very thick flan dated 1897.

The following is a description of the coins of the Kruger series, all of which have a milled edges except the threepence and the penny:

1. *Pond* - Obverse: Bust of President Kruger facing left. Around, *Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek*.

Reverse: ZAR coat-of-arms and motto *Eendraght maakt magt*. Around, *1 pond* and the date. *Gold*.

2. *Half-pond* - Obverse: Same as No.1.

Reverse: Coat-of-arms and motto. Around, $\frac{1}{2}$ *pond* and the date. *Gold*.

3. *Crown* – Obverse: Same as No.1.

Reverse: Coat-of-arms and motto. Around *5 shillings* and the date *1892*. *Silver*.

4. *Half-crown* – Obverse: Same as No.1.

Reverse: Coat-of-arms and motto. Around, *2½ shillings* and the date. *Silver*.

5. *Florin* – Obverse: Bust of Kruger facing left.

Reverse: Coat-of-arms. Around, *2 shillings*, *Zuid Afrik. Repub.* and the date. *Silver*.

6. *One shilling* – Obverse: Same as No.5.

Reverse: *1 shilling* and the date within a wreath. Around, *Z. Afrik. Rep.* *Silver*.

7. *Sixpence* – Obverse: Same as No.5.

Reverse: *6* and the date within a wreath. Around, *ZAR.* *Silver*.

8. *Threepence* – Obverse: Same as No.5.

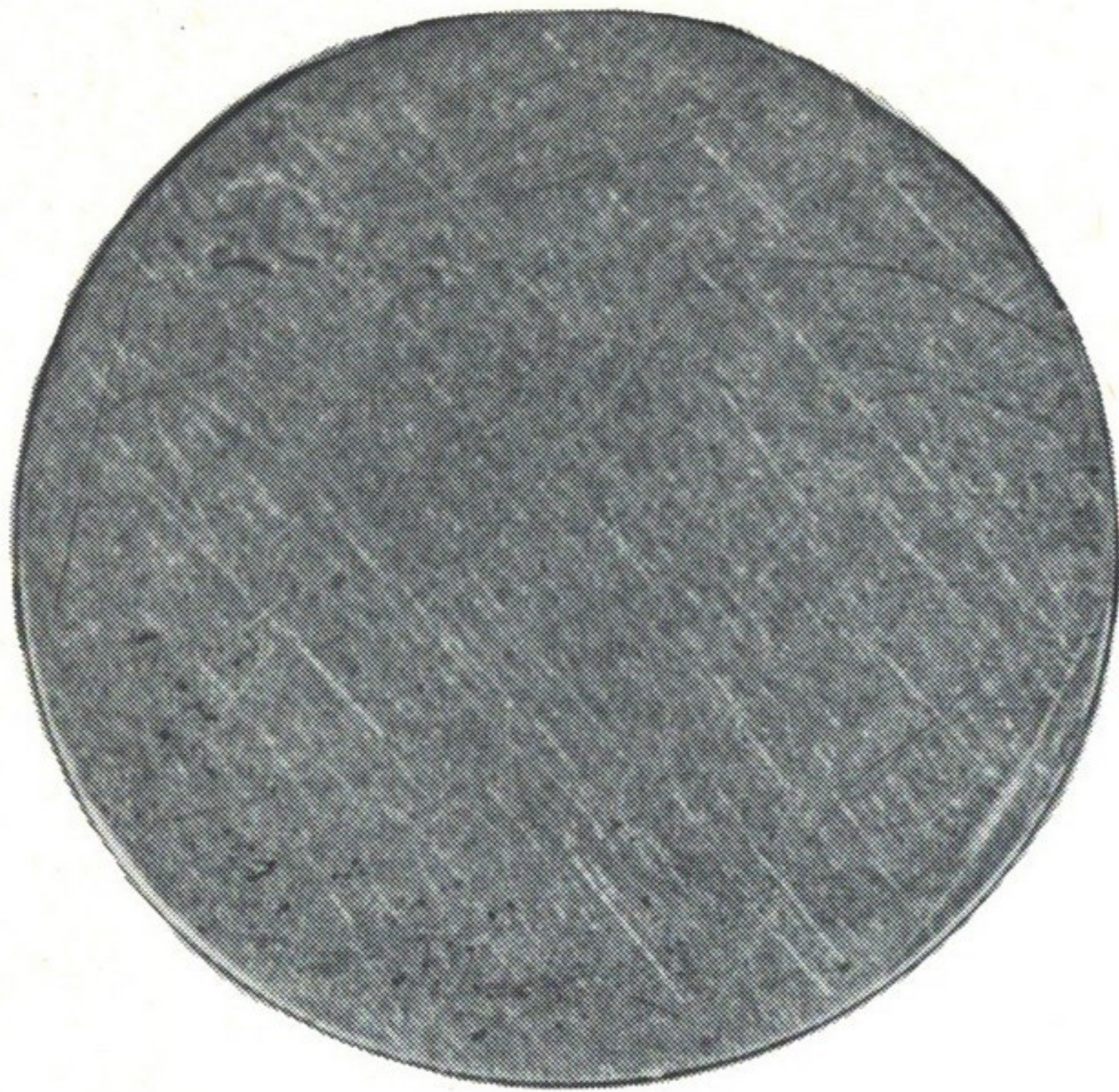
Reverse: *3* and date within a wreath. Around, *ZAR.* *Silver*.

9. *Penny* – Obverse: Bust to left. Around, *Zuid Afrik. Republiek.*

Reverse: Coat-of-arms and motto. Around, *1 penny* and the date. *Bronze*.

The Kruger Gold Tickeys and Gold Half-Crown

Mr Samuel Marks, financier and intimate friend of Paul Kruger, was given permission, so the legend goes, to make use of the Mint for one day in return for the pair of stone lions still to be seen in front of the President's residence in Pretoria. Mr Marks then instructed the Mint officials to strike a number of gold threepenny pieces or tickeys, from gold found on one of his properties. An official record, however, states that *at the request of Mr Samuel Marks a number of gold threepenny pieces were minted* on the verbal instructions of the State Secretary, but that the permission was withdrawn immediately. However, 215 tickeys bearing the date 1898 were struck in gold from dies forming part of the 1898 series which had been received from Germany but had not been used before. According to Mr B. Herring (*The Star*, 3.2.1961) *the whole investment plus any fee he may have paid the Mint cost our Sammy about £80. The total value of all the coins if you could assemble them today would be £43,000.* The coins were not legal tender and did not circulate.



Top left: *Blank, rimless* **Top right:** *Blank, with rim* **Foot:** *ZAR veld pond, obverse and reverse*

In *The Star* of 5.8.1960 it was reported that replicas of the Sammy Marks Tickey were being made in Italy. The reverse of the replica is upside down. Here it may be noted that it is not illegal to make reproductions of curios.

A gold tickey dated 1894 in the possession of the South African Mint and a gold half-crown dated 1892 are two mysterious products of the ZAR Mint. Mr Becklake was not certain, however, whether the half-crown was struck with the dies of the ZAR. A gold half-crown dated 1892 from the Duveen Collection was sold at Glendining's sale in London in 1964 for £3,600. This is probably the same coin as that mentioned by Mr Becklake.

The Kaal Pond or Veld Blank

On 4 June 1900 the Republican Government was forced to evacuate Pretoria, which was occupied by British troops. Officials went to the Mint and recovered bar gold, stocks of finished coins and pond pieces in an incomplete state of manufacture. Many of these blank discs of gold, some of which had a raised rim and some of which were plain, had as Mr Becklake says: 'a more or less defined circular mark on their flat surface, sometimes on both sides, concentric with the perimeter. This was produced by a scraping machine used in the ZAR Mint to reduce the weight of blanks which were too heavy. Its presence is evidence of genuineness but its absence does not necessarily indicate the opposite, since some pieces did not require to be scraped.' They all contained a pound's worth of gold. The veld blank or kaal pond (naked pound) was used by the Government as money when there was a shortage of minted coins during the War. They circulated to some extent in the Republican Army.

Blank Pennies

Mention is made from time to time of blank pennies. It is probable that these were some blank pennies left over from the 1898 coinage which were taken over by the National Bank and given as souvenirs to its clients when the Mint closed down.

The Veld Pond

In March and April 1902, when there was a shortage of coins, a mint, the *Staatsmunt te Velde* improvised from machinery found in the Transvaal Mining Estates' workshop, was set up in the veld at Pilgrim's Rest.

The Government still possessed a small quantity of bar gold and this,

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together with alluvial gold and scrapings from the reduction works of the mines in the Pilgrim's Rest area, was converted into about one thousand coins known as veld ponde. Some authorities say 986 coins were minted. These veld ponde were exchanged with the burghers for their British sovereigns to facilitate trade with the local Bantu who would accept only coins *with the horse on it*. The forces in the field were dependent upon the Bantu for their food supplies, especially mealies.

Mr P. J. Kloppers, a school master, and later an Inspector of Education, assisted by Mr W. Reid and Mr D. Graham, battled successfully with the primitive machinery they were forced to use. Assisted by an American assayer, Mr W. Cooney, they (in the words of Mr S. E. Edwards): 'refined the gold in the mine furnace and crucibles until it was actually 24 carat, which means that it was as near as possible 100 per cent pure gold. The gold was then poured onto flat stones and from there it was thinned by a small hand operated rolling mill (the electricity plant at the mine had been wrecked earlier in the War). Considerable difficulty was experienced with the gold which developed cracks during the rolling process, making it useless for coinage. After making experiments it was found that by adding a little mercury sublimate to the crucibles, the gold became soft and could be rolled without cracking. The mercury sublimate was an antiseptic which Mr Kloppers obtained from the ambulance stores. A primitive punching machine, used by the mine for striking holes in steel plate to receive rivets, was converted to make the gold discs', which were struck from two dies only, and these were produced by acid etching on the steel by the Mint Master Mr P. J. Kloppers, to whom great credit was due.

On the obverse of the coin are the letters *Z.A.R.* and the date *1902*. The reverse bears the mark of value *Een Pond*. The edges are milled.

The coins struck as an emergency during wartime were ordered by the Republican Government in the Field and are known as *siege pieces* or *money of necessity*. Their gold value is probably slightly in excess of their face value. Counterfeits of this coin are numerous.

Kruger coinage was declared legal tender in the Orange River Colony in 1900, but in the Transvaal, where it had never ceased to be used, only in 1906. In the Cape and Natal it was not legal tender until 1911, when the Transvaal and British coins were made legal tender side by side throughout the country. Although never demonetised, Kruger coins are no longer in circulation. Between 1925 and 1935 Kruger gold was withdrawn and re-minted into Union coinage and Kruger silver was withdrawn between 1923 and 1937.

The first gold Krugerrand coin was struck at the South African Mint in Pretoria in July 1967 by the Minister of Finance, Dr N. Diederichs. The minting was done with the minting press used for striking the original Kruger coins by the Mint of the ZAR. The effigy of President Kruger came from the same master die used to make the original Kruger half-crowns at the original mint building which stood on Church Square in Pretoria.

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