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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Shackleton's whisky revealed**

After much anticipation, the contents of a whisky crate from Ernest Shackleton's 1908 British Antarctic (*Nimrod*) Expedition have been revealed today.

A team of Antarctic Heritage Trust and Canterbury Museum conservators have been examining and working on the crate for the last two weeks in a purpose built cool room. As the ice inside gradually thawed the team was able to examine the contents, and today they extracted several intact bottles labelled 'Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt Whisky'.

"It's been a delicate and slow process but we are delighted to be able to confirm that the crate contains intact bottles of whisky" said Lizzie Meek, Antarctic Heritage Trust Artefacts Manager.

Eleven bottles of the 114-year old whisky have been recovered of which remarkably ten appear perfectly intact despite their labels having deteriorated. The wording 'British Antarctic Expedition 1907 Ship Endurance' is still visible on some of the bottles. As it transpired Shackleton never changed the name of the ship *Nimrod* to *Endurance* for this expedition.

Intriguingly, one bottle is missing from the packing inside the crate. This is consistent with where the crate itself appears to have been jimmied open and the timber broken. "Perhaps one of Shackleton's crew just couldn't resist a tippie" said Ms Meek.

Each of the bottles will be carefully assessed and conserved in the coming weeks.

The Antarctic Heritage Trust plans to work with the owners of the Mackinlay's brand, Whyte and Mackay, to extract and analyse the whisky. "The ultimate aim is to replicate the original blend so that whisky drinkers the world over can enjoy this gift from the whisky gods. There is much to do before we know if this is possible" said Richard Paterson, Whyte and Mackay's master blender.

Images of the whisky bottles and video of the conservators at work can be seen in the project blog set up at <http://whiskythaw.canterburymuseum.com/>

It is expected the crate and its contents will remain on display at Canterbury Museum for the next month. Following conservation and analysis the intention is to eventually return them to Antarctica.

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### **Contacts**

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**Contact for HD footage of the crate's discovery and excavation from Antarctica**  
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### **Background**

New Zealand's Antarctic Heritage Trust cares for the four iconic expedition huts in the Ross Dependency including Ernest Shackleton's only Antarctic base which is at Cape Royds, Ross Island, Antarctica.

Canterbury Museum is located on Rolleston Avenue, in the Cultural Precinct, next to the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and opposite The Arts Centre on Worcester Boulevard. General admission to the Museum is free; donations are appreciated.

### **Images**

1. Bottle of Mackinlays whisky extracted discovered under Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds, Antarctica and thawed at Canterbury Museum
  2. Shackleton's hut, Cape Royds, Antarctica
- All photos credit: nzaht.org