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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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(2 pages)

### **100+ year old Whisky and Brandy Crates Excavated in Antarctica**

A New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust team of conservators has excavated five crates from beneath Ernest Shackleton's only Antarctic hut. Team leader Al Fastier noted "we thought there were two crates possibly containing whisky under the 1908 building. To our amazement we found five crates, three labelled as containing whisky and two labelled as containing brandy."

"The unexpected find of the brandy crates, one labelled Chas Mackinlay & Co and the other labelled The Hunter Valley Distillery Limited Allandale are a real bonus" said Al Fastier.

Ice has cracked some of the crates and formed inside them which will make the job of extracting the contents very delicate. The team is confident that the crates contain intact alcohol, given liquid can be heard when the crates are moved. The smell of whisky in the surrounding ice before excavation commenced also indicated full bottles of spirits were inside, albeit that one or more might have broken.

Richard Paterson, master blender at Whyte and Mackay, whose company supplied the Mackinlay's whisky for Shackleton described this as "a gift from the heavens for whisky lovers. If the contents can be confirmed, safely extracted and analysed, the original blend may be able to be replicated. Given the original recipe no longer exists this may open a door into history. We look forward to working with the Trust to try and replicate the whisky for mutual benefit, allow people to taste a true part of history and be part of what must be the whisky story of the century."

The Antarctic Heritage Trust's approach to how best undertake this unprecedented and delicate conservation task will be determined in the coming weeks.

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**All Photos to be credited to: nzaht.org**

**Contact details:**

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Sir Ernest Shackleton's base, Cape Royds, Antarctica. Credit: nzaht.org



The crates of Mackinlay's whisky. Credit: nzaht.org



The crates of brandy. Credit: nzaht.org