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MEDIA RELEASE

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(2 Pages)

Shackleton's whisky thaw at Canterbury Museum

A project to thaw, open and examine a crate of what is believed to contain whisky from Ernest Shackleton's 1908 British Antarctic (*Nimrod*) Expedition has started at Canterbury Museum, New Zealand.

The *Nimrod* expedition made Shackleton a hero, a knight and cemented his reputation as one of the greatest explorers of all time. In January 2010 New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust conservators excavated five crates believed to still contain whisky and brandy from under Shackleton's expedition base in Antarctica.

One frozen crate labelled 'Mackinlay's whisky' has been carefully removed from Antarctica by the Trust and flown back to New Zealand.

"As a direct result of the huge public interest in the find, we want to provide an opportunity for people to see a crate thawed and its contents revealed," says Antarctic Heritage Trust Director Nigel Watson.

In collaboration with Canterbury Museum, New Zealand a cool room has been constructed to allow the public to see first-hand the process as conservators firstly raise the temperature in a controlled process to above freezing point and then defrost the crate to see if a dram or two of one of the world's oldest and coolest whisky still remains.

The thaw will be tracked in a blog at <http://whiskythaw.canterburymuseum.com/>

Whyte & Mackay now own the Mackinlay's brand. Master blender Richard Paterson said, "I will be watching the website with interest and hope the whisky has been truly preserved. It would be the highlight of my career to date to be able to analyse and replicate this liquid gold".

Once the crate and its contents have been conserved, and following any analysis, the intention is to return it to Antarctica.

A television documentary on the find has been commissioned and is expected to screen in 2011 on National Geographic Channel.

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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

Shackleton's hut, Cape Royds Antarctica. Photo credit: nzaht.org.

The crate of whisky on display in a freezer at Canterbury Museum. Photo credit nzaht.org.

Further images available on request.