

Explorers' century-old whisky found in Antarctic

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File photo shows penguins on an ice field in Antarctica. Five crates of whisky and brandy belonging to polar explorer Ernest Shackleton have been recovered after being buried for more than 100 years beneath the Antarctic ice, explorers said Friday.

(AP) -- This Scotch has been on the rocks for a century.

Five crates of Scotch whisky and two of brandy have been recovered by a team restoring an Antarctic hut used more than 100 years ago by famed polar explorer Ernest Shackleton.

Ice cracked some of the bottles that had been left there in 1909, but the restorers said Friday they are confident the five crates contain intact bottles "given liquid can be heard when the crates are moved."

[New Zealand](#) Antarctic Heritage Trust team leader Al Fastier said the

team thought there were two crates and were amazed to find five.

Current distillery owner, drinks group Whyte & Mackay, launched the bid to recover the Scotch whisky for samples to test and decide whether to relaunch the defunct spirit made by distiller McKinlay and Co.

Fastier said restoration workers found the crates under the hut's floorboards in 2006, but they were too deeply embedded in ice to be dislodged.

The New Zealanders agreed to drill the ice to try to retrieve some bottles, although the rest must stay under conservation guidelines agreed to by 12 Antarctic Treaty nations.

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

Ice has cracked some of the crates and formed inside them. Fastier said in a statement that would make extracting the contents delicate, but the trust would decide how to do so in coming weeks.

Richard Paterson, master blender at Whyte and Mackay, whose company supplied the Mackinlay's whisky for Shackleton, described the find as "a gift from the heavens for whisky lovers."

"If the contents can be confirmed, safely extracted and analyzed, the original blend may be able to be replicated. Given the original recipe no longer exists, this may open a door into history," he said in a statement.

Shackleton's expedition ran short of supplies on its long ski trek to the South Pole from the northern [Antarctic](#) coast in 1907-1909 and turned back about 100 miles (160 kilometers) short of its goal.

The expedition sailed away in 1909 as winter ice formed, leaving behind supplies, including the whisky and brandy.

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