



## CAPE ROYDS

### SUSTENANCE FOR THE EXPLORERS

For the shore party of the British Antarctic Expedition 1907-09, Shackleton paid special attention to the selection of food. There was sufficient taken to last the 15 man shore party two years.

Included were tinned meats, fish, jams, dehydrated vegetables, soup and bottled and dried fruits. Although at the time there was little scientific knowledge on vitamins, Shackleton concerned about scurvy commented, "my aim was to secure a large variety of foods for use during the winter night.... a variety of food is healthful....". By today's standards, some of the quantities taken appear excessive. There was 1260 lbs (572 kg) of sardines, 760 lbs (345 kg) of salt in two pound (.9 kg) jars, 1000 lbs (454 kg) of cocoa and 11200 lbs (5084 kg) of flour. Other supplies donated or purchased in New Zealand included, sheep donated by Canterbury farmers and 240 lb (109 kg) of Irish stew from the Christchurch Meat Company.

Englishmen enjoy their ham and mustard and bacon and eggs. For the shore party, 1600 lbs (726 kg) of Finest York hams, 100 lbs (45 kg) of Colman's mustard, 1100 lbs (495 kg) of bacon 'middles', 1470 lbs (661kg) of bacon in tins and 288 lbs (131 kg) of Bird's powdered egg were purchased. Roberts the cook laid out the table before meals and in summer, many a 'counter lunch' considered of thick ham sandwiches.

With departure of the expedition, marooned members of Shackleton's Ross Sea party in 1915-16 based further south at Cape Evans, foraged for supplies. They were grateful for provisions left by Shackleton and also for fresh Adelie penguin eggs which were used for omelettes. With the return of land-based parties 40 years later, at least one ham was removed and found edible, however sampling of food is now prohibited. Today three York hams still with original wrapping and familiar aroma can be seen hanging on a gallery wall.

*Prepared for Antarctic Heritage Trust  
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