NEW DIRECTIONS
The Director Writes

Over the past two and a half years, I have tried on this page to give a
director's-eye view of the nature, scope and utilization of our collections, of
our archives resulting from expeditions and collecting, and of our publics,
actual and potential, for whom the Museum exists and for whose benefit, as
we hope, the policies emerging on these pages are being developed.

Over the next few issues of Expedition, I shall want to say something
of our research in the field in the vexed condition of world affairs in which
this decade began, and something also of the Museum's attitudes and
potential in face of the world-wide destruction of archaeological sites
whether by development or by the search for loot to feed the art markets of
the great cities.

But let us pause for a moment. As these words are written, the year is
turning into the eighties, the decade in which the Museum will celebrate its
centenary, on 6 December 1987. This is a challenge and a target about
which a great deal more will be heard as the date draws nearer. How do we
stand, though, at this moment, after two years of 'new directions'?

The collections are being inventoried, store-rooms have been cleaned
and re-organized, exhibits, large and small have been mounted, notably our
first big exhibition for many years, the successful "Search for Ancient
Egypt" which closed in September. An exciting two-year schedule of
exhibitions is now before us. "Egyptian Mummies and Their Secrets," "The
Looting of the Maya," and our biggest effort to date, "The Arts of Benin,"
for which we have just received a one-year planning grant from the
National Endowment for the Humanities.

The revived monograph series is under way, with three volumes
published, three in proof and as many as ten more on the stocks. By the
spring we shall have published as many monographs in two and a half years
as in the previous decade. The MASCA Journal has been launched and its
third issue has just appeared. A major report on our archives has been
produced and three grant applications have been launched to provide the
funds to set up the best museum archive in the country.

MASCA flourishes; MICA (The Museum Institute for Conservation
Archaeology) has been born and is alive and well and digging in Philadelphia
and round about. A major plan for renovation of the entire building is far
advanced; a very major development campaign will be launched this year.
The Museum was in the field in ten countries in 1979 and will be as far
flung this year.

We are desperately short of money, but times of difficulty are times to
plan for the future. The course now being charted by the Board of Managers
is consciously designed to take the Museum beyond our centenary and far
into the twenty-first century.

MARTIN BIDDLE