

# Muriel Box (director, producer, screenwriter) 22/9/1905 - 18/5/1991

by [admin](#) — last modified Jul 28, 2008 04:21 PM

**BIOGRAPHY:** One of Britain's few female film directors, Muriel Box entered the British film industry working on continuity and scriptwriting in 1932. During the war she worked for Verity Films – a documentary company set up by her husband, Sydney Box. She won an Oscar for her script *The Seventh Veil* (1945) and later became the scenario editor at Gainsborough Studios. She directed her first feature film, *The Happy Family*, in 1952 and worked consistently in a variety of genres until 1964. Additional directorial credits include *Street Corner* (1953) and *Too Young to Love* (1959). **SUMMARY:** In this interview she talks to Sid Cole, chiefly about her directing career, particularly her work on *The Happy Family*, *The Beachcomber*, *To Dorothy a Son*, *Simon and Laura*, and *The Truth About Women*. She discusses the difficulties she encountered as a female film director in a male dominated industry, and remembers several of her stars, including Robert Newton and Kay Kendall.

## BECTU History Project - Interview No. 177

[Copyright [BECTU](#)

]

Transcription Date: ???

Interview Date: 1991-01-16

Interviewer: Sidney Cole

Interviewee: Muriel Box

Tape 1, Side 1

**Sidney Cole :** It's great to be here recording you because we've both (Alan and I) read that fascinating autobiography of yours, so I won't ask you very much about the early days before you were in films, but you were born in 1905, which makes you a bit older than me, but did your family have any connection with the entertainment business?

**Muriel Box** : No, except my father played the violin - orchestra.

**Sidney Cole** : And that gave you a taste for music?

**Alan ?** : In an orchestra?

**Muriel Box** : A local, just a local.

**Sidney Cole** : Yes, amateur, because what did he do as a profession?

**Muriel Box** : He was on the railway, Southern railway.

**Sidney Cole** : Yes, I remember from the book, he worked at one of the main stations didn't he?

**Muriel Box** : Yes, Waterloo.

**Sidney Cole** : You had some education, but you were a very independent young woman - girl-weren't you? You didn't go along too much with normal education as far as I know.

**Muriel Box** : Well my mother sent me to a convent and I stayed there for some years, then she sent me to into the Kingston school [...]

**Sidney Cole** : You were saying that you went to a school at Kingston, was that the convent school?

**Muriel Box** : No the convent school was at Wimbledon, and that gave up and I went to the Kingston one, a higher school there.

**Sidney Cole** : Did you get much out of your schooling? I got the impression from your book that you always ...

**Muriel Box** : I disliked it intensely.

**Sidney Cole** : You really wanted to spread your wings and get out into the world?

**Muriel Box** : Well I wanted to do something and I could see nothing that I could do from a school. I really got much more from reading after I left school than I ever got at school.

**Sidney Cole** : It sounds as if that was largely due to rather authoritarian teachers.

**Muriel Box** : Something like that I think, they didn't pay attention to you. My daughter has become now a teacher and she's really keen on it.

**Sidney Cole** : Well she's not an authoritarian I shouldn't think, not from her upbringing with you.

**Muriel Box** : No, she's a painter. She's 52 now I think.

**Sidney Cole** : It's amazing how children catch up with you. So, to cut a long story short, how did get into the film business?

**Muriel Box** : Oh dear, very tortuous. I wanted to learn when I was at Welwyn Garden City - I lived there, I'd left home at twenty and a friend of ours offered me a home there - I managed to get a job in the short-hand typing.

**Sidney Cole** : At Welwyn Garden City studios?

**Muriel Box** : Yes.

**Sidney Cole** : When would that be round about? In the late '20s?

**Muriel Box** : No in the early '20s, about '22 or '3. That's when I knew silent films were the rage, because they were up a gum tree with them, they couldn't get rid of all our films they'd made during the war and that nearly bankrupted them because the talkies had just come in and they weren't prepared for it and they'd nothing to show for it. They used to have cinemas where they showed their silent films and they were showing talkies. So when I got in, Teddy Baird, he was my boss.

**Sidney Cole** : At Welwyn?

**Muriel Box** : Yes.

**Sidney Cole** : Then you went on to become a continuity girl.

**Muriel Box** : Well I was introduced to it. I'll tell you how it happened. I wanted to learn continuity very much, how to do it, or cutting, I'd have liked to have edited films, there was a lovely opportunity to edit films, and I asked Mary Field who was doing nature films there.

**Sidney Cole** : Oh that very famous 'Secrets of Nature' series?

**Muriel Box** : Yes that's right, they were there then. I think it was their mainstay. And I asked her if there was any hope of my being able to come and work in the evenings, if there was any work in the evenings I could do just to learn how to edit a film because I didn't know about it. And she said, "Oh no, I don't think so." So I never got in to do any editing at all. It rather put me off. I thought it was strange, I didn't want any money, I said I'd do it for nothing if only I could learn how to edit, I'd come in the evening at any time.

**Sidney Cole** : But it didn't happen?

**Muriel Box** : No, I never got the chance.

**Sidney Cole** : So how then did you come to do continuity?

**Muriel Box :** It was simply an accident. The continuity girl on - Asquith was there, he made some films there - and the continuity girl that was booked for the next picture, I forget what it was ...

**Alan ? :** He was doing 'Telling Them' there.

**Sidney Cole :** And 'Cottage on Dartmoor' didn't he with Norma Bering? She was a rather beautiful lady as I remember. So it was on one of those Asquith pictures was it that you were picked for continuity?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, she fell ill apparently at the beginning of the film, about the second day they came to say that she had a rather bad bout of flu and they said, "Would you be prepared to try and stand in for her for the time being?" I said, "I know nothing about continuity, I'd loved to do it, but I don't know it so there's no good me doing it, you'll haul me over the coals afterwards." He said, "Oh no we'll help you all we can, we know what is required with continuity and if you do what we direct you to do, because we know it roughly, it will be a chance for you to learn a bit of it." So, me being very, very eager to do anything in the way of learning how to do films you see, I agreed. I had to look after it for about a fortnight and it was the beginning of the picture and they were awfully decent, they helped me on everything so I began to learn about it. And I used to think when she was due back, "I wish she wasn't due back, I wish were dead, I could carry on."

**Sidney Cole :** And did she come back?

**Muriel Box :** Yes she did come back. Nice girl, I wrote to her afterwards.

**Sidney Cole :** So then what happened, you had to go back to just being a secretary?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, but then they were nearly bankrupt with talkies coming in and they hadn't got any. And I went on a holiday, my one year's holiday - I hadn't ever been on holiday- and when I came back there was a note on my desk giving me my notice to quit. I was absolutely shocked because that was my life and I had no other means of living.

**Sidney Cole :** So what did you do?

**Muriel Box :** So I said to Asquith, one day at lunchtime I said, "Would you be a dear and give me some sort of notice about my work here? You've seen my work, I'd like to get started in the film business, as continuity if it's possible." And he said, "Oh yes, I'd certainly give you a notice." So he went and wrote me a charming letter on it and when he came back and gave it to me I thanked him very much and at the end of that week I had to leave. So with the letter he'd given me I wrote to Elstree because I'd met - you'll read all about that at the beginning of my life ...

**Sidney Cole :** About Joe Grossman? A lovely, charming incident.

**Muriel Box :** Yes, so I wrote to him, he was the manager of BIP and I had an interview with him, he was extremely nice and he engaged me. Because he said "We've got a series of short ones being done by Bernard Mainwaring." so that's how I knew him. So I said, "Thank you very much," and I started very soon, about two weeks later.

**Sidney Cole :** Do you know how much they paid you in those days?

**Muriel Box :** Oh very little.

**Sidney Cole :** About a couple of pounds a week?

**Muriel Box :** Something like that. What ever it was, I took it, I wanted my money to exist on.

**Sidney Cole :** That's when Hitchcock would have been working at the studio then. Did you come across him at all?

**Muriel Box :** Oh yes. The most extraordinary thing - if you go in my study where I work you'll see - during the time I was at Elstree, Shaw's first picture was made there.

**Sidney Cole :** Oh yes, 'How She Lied to Her Husband'.

**Muriel Box :** And I was on it.

**Sidney Cole :** So you had the experience of meeting the great man?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, several times.

**Sidney Cole :** And you had read him by then. Don't you say in your book that among your readings had been Bernard Shaw?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, my mother was very keen on him and she took me to all his lectures.

**Sidney Cole :** Those marvellous Fabian lectures at the Kingsway Hall?

**Muriel Box :** That's right. If you go in my study and look round you'll see on the right hand side one or two photographs and you'll see me up there.

**Sidney Cole :** With Shaw?

**Muriel Box :** Yes.

**Sidney Cole :** But those pictures didn't last very long, being short pictures?

**Muriel Box :** Well that was the only short one he did there.

**Sidney Cole :** I meant the other ones with Bernard Mainwaring. So what happened after you'd done those 2 or 3 short pictures, did you still stay there?

**Muriel Box :** I stayed there about a year or more.

**Sidney Cole :** What other pictures can you remember that you worked on?

**Muriel Box :** I can't remember what their titles were - nothing famous, except the Shaw one.

**Sidney Cole :** But they were still silent days?

**Muriel Box :** No.

**Sidney Cole :** No of course, the Shaw one was dialogue. So that would be around about the late '20s or 1930 perhaps? Around about the time they were putting dialogue on to 'Blackmail', Hitchcock's film.

**Muriel Box :** That's right.

**Sidney Cole :** So what did you do after that when your time at Elstree finished temporarily?

**Muriel Box :** I thought I must get myself an agent like the other people had. So I asked around and people were very kind and told me certain agents I should go to and I asked what their names was. So they gave me one and I went to an agent and said, "I want you to get me some continuity work, I believe other studios want them. So would you put me down as a continuity girl." So after a while, I had one or two at Walton-on-Thames, and various other bits and pieces around, very small beer it was at that time.

**Alan ? :** Can you remember who the agent was?

**Muriel Box :** I can't, I'm sorry.

**Sidney Cole :** Is it in the book?

**Muriel Box :** Not in the book, I'd remember that. But the funny thing is on one of the pages of Rex's book, but who should I come across but Connie.

**Sidney Cole :** Oh yes she was a very famous lady, everybody knew Connie, and she was married to an actor, I'm trying to remember his name...

**Muriel Box :** He was a good actor, a character actor.

**Sidney Cole :** It wasn't Edmund Gwenn. It was someone rather like Edmund Gwenn. I can see him but I can't put a name. Anyhow, that was Connie, but that wasn't the agent you went to for continuity?

**Muriel Box :** No.

**Sidney Cole :** But he found you some work?

**Muriel Box :** Oh yes, and I went down and stayed at Walton-on-Thames because Micky Powell...

**Sidney Cole :** Yes he was starting around then wasn't he?

**Muriel Box :** Yes and Jerry Jackson who was a producer.

**Sidney Cole :** And some of Michael Powell's early, very modest budget pictures starred somebody called Jerry Verno , do you remember that actor?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, a comedian wasn't he?

**Sidney Cole :** That's right. I remember a film of Powell's which finished with him, I think it was Jerry Verno, driving a taxi and someone was shot in front of him and the last line of the picture was "If they'd left him to me, I'd have finished him off for half a crown." I remember seeing that at the old Tivoli cinema.

**Muriel Box :** Really? I never saw that. But it was just about my time at Walton. I did one for him and afterwards they wanted me to do another and I said, "I don't know whether I can, I think I'm engaged, though I'm not sure whether it's a firm offer." Anyway, they wanted somebody to be a secretarial-cum-film person who could control the film side of their business and I went to work with him in Wardour Street.

**Sidney Cole :** What was the name of that film?

**Muriel Box :** You could probably get it from my book.

**Sidney Cole :** If it's in the book, then not to worry. So you were back being a secretary?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, I was but every film script was sent to me to vet, so I vetted them and recommend anyone I thought was very, very good, so I had a lot of work.

**Sidney Cole :** Wasn't that how you met Sydney?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, I saw him at the local festival where I lived at Welwyn and I thought this was a very original thinker. So I had him up to see what he was like and I said, "Have you got any more work to show?" And he said, "I'm afraid I haven't, I don't know about films." I said, "We'll keep watch on you and see how you get on."

**Sidney Cole :** So were any of his play scripts bought for filming?

**Muriel Box :** Oh no, we weren't interested in any of them in the slightest.

**Sidney Cole :** So did he keep sending scripts to you?

**Muriel Box :** No.

**Sidney Cole :** So how did your friendship with Sydney develop?

**Muriel Box :** Well he had about two films in two years and he'd won the Original Play prize at Welwyn, so I thought this was a very interesting man and I'd been writing plays myself then and I showed him one and we got together over the films. I moved to Regents Park then because it was so terribly difficult to get a place where you could from to the central studios, it took ages you know. So that's how I met him. We got married about '33 and then I left it because I was expecting my daughter - who's Leonora - and it was after that, it was getting on for the war coming, do you remember?

**Sidney Cole :** Ah yes, well 1933 was a significant year wasn't it? With our friend Hitler coming to power.

**Alan ? :** There's one credit in Rachel Low for you and Sydney providing a script for Walter Tennyson d'Eyncourt

**Muriel Box :** That's right. Yes I wrote to him at Christmas.

**Sidney Cole :** Didn't you and Sydney write some One Act plays which had some quite good circulation among amateur companies. Didn't Samuel French put those out?

**Muriel Box :** They bought them, yes.

**Sidney Cole :** So how did you get into films in the sense of writing or doing scripts?

**Muriel Box :** Ralph Smart came round one day and said, "I've just been working on my script for a film and would like to make it, but I don't know who can write the thing. I've got the whole plan of it but do you know anyone whose capable of writing scripts?" So I said, "He's a very, very bright writer, he'd soon cotton to what you wanted to say." So I had Ralph one night to dinner with me and he met Sydney and he said, "He strikes me as being rather bright on it, so I'll let him try it and I'll introduce him to the firm." He had a firm not far from Leicester Square. So they engaged him to try and write the script, so he wrote it and they were very pleased with it and he was rather pleased that he was learning, because he was a journalist you see. And they said, "If we can get a script for you to do, would you like to carry on working on it?" And he said, "I'd like that very much." So they were commercial films, and they were approached by firms to make them and they'd shove them on to Sydney to write them because he seemed to be quick on the uptake on all these things.

**Sidney Cole :** So when did you actually start doing scripts?

**Muriel Box :** Who me? I wrote them all the time, endless writing I used to try, one after the other.

**Sidney Cole** : I mean ones that actually got made into films?

**Muriel Box** : At that time? He gave me my first opportunity to direct, that was so funny. He'd been writing about two years of commercial scripts, he'd got the hang of it.

**Alan ?** : This was Publicity Pictures wasn't it?

**Muriel Box** : That's right.

**Sidney Cole** : Where were they based? Wardour Street?

**Muriel Box** : It wasn't in Wardour Street, I think they were on the corner near where the Ivy Restaurant was.

**Sidney Cole** : Near the Ambassador and St Martin's theatres.

**Muriel Box** : Yes, it was just across there and they had the corner site. Anyway, one of the agents, Christopher Mann, had been approached by [forgets name], quite famous. He was going to make a film himself, but didn't know how to make it, and said, "I want a reliable producer and writer." He read my script and said it was alright. So Christopher Mann had heard about Sydney from people we knew in the business and he said, "I heard that this young man writes very well and seems to be very bright on films, would you like to meet him?" So he arranged for him, the actor that was...

**Alan ?** : Would you like to stop so you can find the name?

**Muriel Box** : I just can't remember his name, that's what's so annoying.

**Sidney Cole** : Yes it's maddening isn't it. Any clue that you can think of? What did he look like?

**Muriel Box** : Very famous. He went to Hollywood and made his name, he was very famous.

**Sidney Cole** : Now this would have been about 1933, 34?

**Muriel Box** : No '41 or 2.

**Alan ?** : Yes, 'On Approval'?

**Muriel Box** : Yes, that's right.

**Sidney Cole** : That would be Clive Brook.

**Muriel Box** : Yes, that's right.

**Sidney Cole** : I wondered if you had met Clive Brook. 'On Approval' was a very nice film. It had some very funny things in it, I remember.

**Muriel Box :** Anyway, I said I would help with continuity, so he said we'd take on the job and he and Clive got on awfully well at first and then Clive got very difficult over some things and they had differences. I remember Sydney walked off the film and said, "I'm afraid I can't go on." Clive said, "I'll finish it off", and he left in the end, but he really got bitten by the bug of films and decided to go on and get his own contacts and approached all the companies he knew for writing jobs, which he got because they knew his style of writing was very attractive to them. So he formed his own company.

**Sidney Cole :** What was that called?

**Muriel Box :** Publicity wasn't it?

**Alan ? :** Verity wasn't it?

**Muriel Box :** Yes that's right. He made a very big success of it and he saw that Riverside Studios was available to book, so he booked it out. He started at Denham and he couldn't really afford to do the films at Denham because he hadn't got the capital because you needed an enormous amount of capital. Anyway, he'd seen a way of getting us started. '29 Acacia Avenue', that was one of his and it was very successful, strangely enough.

**Sidney Cole :** He wrote and directed that did he?

**Muriel Box :** No, wasn't it Cass who directed that? Anyway it was well done and well received. So he said, "I can't see why I can't manage it." So he went and booked it. I thought it was extraordinary it - without really going into what it involved - but there were certain spaces which they hadn't sold off in the way of booking it for future films, so they let him book some and 'Acacia Avenue' was very good and seemed to be liked very much and he just sailed on from that moment.

**Sidney Cole :** What about you meanwhile? What were you doing on 'Acacia Avenue' for instance?

**Muriel Box :** I didn't do much on 'Acacia Avenue', it wasn't necessary, she'd got the script there and it was absolutely all set. The main thing from the very beginning was that I was able to advise Sydney on the way scripts were done and constructed. I knew that, I'd worked on them for several years at Elstree.

**Sidney Cole :** So what was the next film after 'Acacia Avenue'?

**Alan ? :** There were some extracts from Shakespeare

**Muriel Box :** Yes, that was Cass.

**Alan ? :** Then, 'The Men from Rochdale'.

**Sidney Cole :** Yes, 'The Men From Rochdale', that was very famous in its day, that was a very good picture. That was about the men from the Co-Operative, the pioneers from the Co-Operative movement.

**Muriel Box :** I used to work on anything that struck my fancy on new ideas. We came home one day - I think it's described in the book there - we used to know all the big Air Force people and we had lunch with the doctor who started all the treatment of shell-shocked prisoners and he had the method which was demonstrated in 'The Seventh Veil' and that was such a cracking success when it opened that Rank offered the studio at Shepherd's Bush to Sydney.

**Alan ? :** But you do have quite a few traumas with 'The Seventh Veil' to get it off the ground didn't you?

**Muriel Box :** You do with every film, I've never known any films you don't. We sat there one day, we were just starting the film, it was the first week I think and they came and told us - Betty was assisting Sydney then on the on the money side, she was very, very sharp on how to do contracts. She used to help a lot with the government on the Air Force and any place like that on the financial side, she came one day and said she had a message from the bank. I was in the office when this happened and she said, "They're not going to lend you the money." It was about forty thousand or something we wanted, and at that moment the assistant director on the film we were making at that moment popped his head round the door and said, "There's trouble on the floor, will you come down and pacify Cass about something he's run about against something." So I said, "That's fine isn't it? We're out of business and we shan't be able to pay the actors or anybody at the end of the film." We couldn't go on, I think he'd pinched our house, we had put all our money in and we had no money to pay for the staff.

**Sidney Cole :** So what happened?

**Muriel Box :** We had various people we had hung onto, anybody who was making films at that time. One of them was Bill MacQuitty. He became a great chum and heard the situation we were in and what we were doing and so he said, "What could last you out a few days on the film?" I said, "We have to pay the salaries and all what's due on the studio." So he said, "I'll stand it, I'd like to work with you if there's any chance." So he handed out the money that saved us really. He still lives over there, he lives in that house opposite. So he did and we carried on and when we finished the film we showed it to him and of course it was a tremendous success. So Rank offered us the job at the Bush.

**Sidney Cole :** Yes, that was really something because that was starting a whole era for yourselves.

**Muriel Box :** It was yes. Anyway, they hadn't films they had prepared, all they had was 'Jassy' which they were just starting because they had bought it and they said, "You must make it." So we carried on making it with Lockwood. Sydney said to me, "Anything you think up, you must go to the script department." So I was appointed the script director and I had to be responsible for all the scripts they made. So imagine them making eight a year, that's what Rank wanted. I said, "You'll drop dead if you go at that pace, even if you've got some prepared."

**Alan ?** : What was your reception in the script department?

**Muriel Box** : "Are you a member of the ACTT?" I'd been absent for years. The funny thing was when I went to BIP, this was at the beginning of the War - we wanted some money because we had no money - I got a job in continuity at Elstree and I went on the floor to collect my things and the shop-steward came up to me and said, "Excuse me, where is your ticket?" I never knew what he meant, so I said, "What is it?" He explained it to me and said he was the Union and you couldn't work there without a ticket and I said, "I'm sorry I have none." So he said, "You won't be able to work here I'm afraid, you have to produce a ticket." At that moment I looked up and there was a bunch of men in the end corner of the studio talking and one of them looked up and saw me and said, "Hello Muriel," and it was somebody I'd worked with before at BIP before I'd left my baby and with that the man heard I was being refused my work and he said, "Oh don't be silly, she's very good at continuity, you'd better grant her a card at once, there's no reason why you shouldn't."

**Alan ?** : Can you remember who the steward was?

**Muriel Box** : No.

**Sidney Cole** : That was at BIP? That would have been 1942? I don't know who that would have been...

**Muriel Box** : About that, '41 or '2.

**Alan ?** : Charlie wasn't there was he?

**Sidney Cole** : No Charlie Wheeler was at Bush.

**Muriel Box** : Yes I know Charlie Wheeler.

**Sidney Cole** : Quite a character. So there you were launched at the Bush with all the films you then made. You didn't actually make eight a year did you?

**Muriel Box** : No, nowhere near, I knew we couldn't have managed that, I knew he would have collapsed under it, anyone would. But they were all pretty successful that we made. Most of them we wrote or completely rewrote the scripts.

**Sidney Cole** : Yes, 'The Years Between' and 'The Man Within', now that was an interesting picture, that was a Graham Greene subject wasn't it? From one of his very early novels. You wrote the script on that and produced it.

**Muriel Box** : I didn't produce it.

**Sidney Cole** : Well, you were credited as producing it.

**Muriel Box** : You saw this on the screen?

**Sidney Cole** : I don't know, but in Leslie Halliwell books, he credits you as producer.

**Muriel Box** : Well I worked on all the scripts.

**Sidney Cole** : But he's credited you as producer for 'The Man Within' and also for 'Dear Murderer'.

**Muriel Box** : That was Betty.

**Sidney Cole** : Oh he's got you mixed up.

**Muriel Box** : I had nothing to do with that, that was Betty's film. When we went to Gainsborough, they wanted someone to do the work at Gainsborough you see, so she was sent to see after that with Peter Rogers. He'd done some religious films for Rank before so he helped her, that's why he started to produce under himself.

**Sidney Cole** : I think Halliwell's got himself a bit mixed up, or I have. But you did 'A Girl in a Million'?

**Muriel Box** : Yes I did that. That was done at Riverside not Gainsborough.

**Sidney Cole** : Halliwell has 'A Girl in a Million' done as later in date, he's got it as 1950.

**Alan ?** : Is going by release dates or production dates?

**Sidney Cole** : Well that's always the problem, you never know because it might be nearly a year before a film is released and all these people who write these books - I don't mean yours, I mean people like Halliwell and other people - often get these dates wrong.

**Muriel Box** : They do because I thought it's funny with the Rex Harrison book, they give the stage plays that he appeared in, all his public appearances on the stage, and they said that's the appendix, they're all in alphabetical order, and thought that's very interesting, so I went and look at them and I found that they were all without any release date of the film. They'd give you a first night of a play, but films were a different thing, you'd have to guess at them.

**Alan ?** : Rachel Low, the date she gives is the trade show date which can be a year adrift.

**Sidney Cole** : Yes, or you could have started a film and it takes two years to make one way or another and therefore it comes out as '48 and you started it in '46 or something.

**Muriel Box** : Yes it's very different it explain it to the public.

**Sidney Cole** : What other pictures have I got down, 'The Happy Family'?

**Muriel Box** : 'The Happy Family' was the first film I directed.

**Sidney Cole** : The first one you directed yourself?

**Muriel Box** : Actually I did some directing always at Gainsborough because - I think I explained the reason in my book - when a film is completed and they're starting to do the editing, there are lots of things they need the artists back for scenes.

**Sidney Cole** : And the retakes can be very important.

**Muriel Box** : Yes, and you know the films backwards because I used to go with him every day to see the rushes of every film and we talked about any improvements we wanted.

**Sidney Cole** : So you used to direct those extra shots?

**Muriel Box** : Always. So that was a great experience and that's how I got to learn how difficult it all was.

**Sidney Cole** : Who was in 'The Happy Family'?

**Muriel Box** : George Cole, Stanley Holloway, Kath Harrison.

SC: Was that a successful picture?

**Muriel Box** : Very successful. We were rather done out of any money on it because the producers, I think that they were crooked. I mean I had no money from them.

**Sidney Cole** : Who were they?

**Muriel Box** : I can't remember. Bill MacQuitty will tell you, I think he had his money in it as well.

**Sidney Cole** : So you didn't get paid on that?

**Muriel Box** : No, I never thought about that when I was with Sydney because he always provided the money and I gave it up, so I just did the work. When I did the first film, I was terrified when I went on the floor to direct it, for the one reason was they'd ask me while I was doing it and if I said I'd never done anything before they'd be absolutely horrified if the press got hold of it. And because someone who came down to do a feature on the making of 'The Happy Family' and I'd started and they said, "You carry on, you know what I want to do about it," and I said, "I do." So I carried on, it was about the first day, they sent somebody else about 'The Happy Family' and I was directing and on the floor came this writer. It was one of these film writers who liked to catch up with all the gossip of new things. She came over to me and I thought, "Oh God, I hope I'm not asked about directing for the first time." So if there were any trouble Sydney always used to say, "Say it's me and you directing, we're co-directors on this picture." I said, "Oh well, if they take that, they'll take anything."

[End of Side One]

[Side Two]

**Muriel Box :** So, this was the first visit I had on the film. She came over and said, "I'd like to know how this came about," and I told her all the story of the film and why we decided to make it and I said 'we' very deliberately because it got me off the embarrassing hook. She was quite happy, made the story and went off.

**Alan ? :** It was Clayton Hutton who wrote the script?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, that's right, I don't know what's happened to him, I should think he's probably dead by now.

**Sidney Cole :** I remember he was at Ealing, I met him with Thorold Dickinson. Then you successfully directed 'The Happy Family'?

**Muriel Box :** Yes well, after a few days, Sydney found the rushes were perfectly reasonable and all the artists were happy. I was terrified the artists would object but they knew that I knew how to do it and was au fait with everything, and after all I had been acting on film in one way or another since I was sixteen, so I ought to have known what I was doing.

**Sidney Cole :** Did you have a good co-operative cameraman on that?

**Muriel Box :** Very Good.

**Sidney Cole :** Can you remember who it was? Did Reg Wyer work a lot on those films? Was he on that one do you think?

**Muriel Box :** Yes Reg did, but I can't remember whether he was on that film.

**Sidney Cole :** So after 'Happy Family', the next one I have down is another very interesting film, 'The Beachcomber'.

**Muriel Box :** Well that was the first, out and abroad. That was financed by Rank, it wasn't financed by us.

**Sidney Cole :** But that's down as you directed that.

**Muriel Box :** Yes I did.

**Sidney Cole :** So who was in that?

**Muriel Box** : Robert Newton and Glynis Johns.

**Sidney Cole** : Glynis Johns was a charmer wasn't she, did you get on well with Glynis?

**Muriel Box** : Yes.

**Sidney Cole** : But Newton was already rather difficult by then wasn't he?

**Muriel Box** : Yes, I had to shoot everything at the end of the picture, he was so on the drink, it was hopeless. So I used to be sure that I got all the interesting and important scenes done in the morning. He was useless in the afternoons, absolutely.

**Alan ?** : Tilly Day, in her interview, talked about 'Beachcomber' and the problems.

**Muriel Box** : Well afterwards he was going on to another picture, and I said, "I hope they are luckier than I was to have him like that." Anyway, he went on the binge and was sacked in two days.

**Sidney Cole** : I was talking with Alan, do remember Cavalcanti? He had that problem with Newton on some picture, it might have been the picture he went on to. He went to the people in charge and said, "Either you fire me or you fire him," and he thought "Goodbye Cavalcanti," but they didn't, they fired Newton.

**Muriel Box** : Well that was it, he was fired after two days because he was drunk.

SC: It's a shame, because he was a very fine actor.

**Muriel Box** : Sometimes he would turn up at 8.30 in the morning - somebody in the studio who was in the cast, it might have been Glynis - and he'd be stone drunk.

**Sidney Cole** : But it was a shame because he was a good actor.

**Muriel Box** : Yes, he was a wonderful actor.

**Sidney Cole** : Anyway, you completed 'The Beachcomber' and it was quite well received wasn't it?

**Muriel Box** : Yes. I had the most awful trouble there because it was a very limited budget and to go out to Ceylon and then make it and pay all the fares, I had to cut down on it. I said, "We can't have the budget as big as this." So they cut it down and Bill said, "You'll be able to make it on this now, what can you cut down?"

**Sidney Cole** : Can you remember what the budget finally that you made this picture for?

**Muriel Box :** Well we used to make ours at Gainsborough, I suppose it was probably more than this when we went out to Ceylon, it was quite different. Probably about £150,000.

**Sidney Cole :** It was quite enough in those days.

**Muriel Box :** Yes, it was quite a big job I had there.

**Sidney Cole :** With a foreign location in it, that was quite a challenge.

**Muriel Box :** That's what they cut down on. You can't use doubles, because not only have you got their fares to pay, there's their accommodation and insurance and everything. So I had to get all the principle locations done in Ceylon and all the studio work was reserved for England. I'll tell you who started in that film with mid or great success, he came to see me when we started to prepare for that studio work [forgets name, stops recording][N.B. Donald Sinden? Donald Pleasence?].

**Sidney Cole :** So what happened to that young man whose name, at the moment, you can't remember?

**Muriel Box :** My assistant said, "It's no good, it's just occurred to me that he's got blue eyes, none of the people in Ceylon have blue eyes." I said, "It's rather difficult because you have to have blue eyes." He said, "Oh that's finished me," and walked to the door and said, "You can forget it", and walked out. I said, "Come back, don't be so hasty." So he came back and we talked about it and the assistant suggested I get him to have blue eyes with contact lenses. So I suggested it would solve our difficulties if he would like to have contact lenses put in and he said, "Oh I'll do anything to get a start in films." So he did and he was very, very good.

**Sidney Cole :** He became very successful later did he?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, he was quite a famous actor. I'll remember his name when you're gone.

**Sidney Cole :** Oh I know, in the morning, or you'll wake up in the middle of the night saying it at the top of your voice.

**Muriel Box :** Yes, this makes me so angry, and I know him quite well.

**Sidney Cole :** It was an interesting picture you did about the same time, according to the books, 'To Dorothy a Son'.

**Muriel Box :** Oh yes, that was one of mine, a very early one with John Wolf.

**Sidney Cole :** Yes and Roger McDougall wrote the original play on that because I remember the story that Roger told me that his agents had said to him after he's had some success in the theatre, he's then had a sort of hiatus and his agent said, "Go away and write a play which only involves two people", which the original play did, it only had two characters in it. But obviously you broadened it out for the film.

**Muriel Box :** Oh I had to.

**Sidney Cole :** But it was a very nice story as I remember.

**Muriel Box :** Oh yes. I remember when we'd finished the film, we always had a party to thank everybody. Shelley Winters was in it, as you remember and I had the most terrible trouble with her, she was very temperamental. Quite alright, nothing wrong with her, but very temperamental. She came over to me during the party, and was very conversational all at once and said, "Oh we must do another one together some time", and I thought, "Oh God I hope I don't ever have to", and so we sat there and she said, "Wouldn't you like to?" And I said, "Oh yes", but I thought it would be dreadful if we did one.

**Alan ? :** Because she was the continuity girl's nightmare wasn't she?

**Muriel Box :** I should think so, oh yes. Very good artist, first class, but never did anything twice and she was awful. Anyway, I vowed of course I would never do anything with her.

**Sidney Cole :** Did you ever do another one else with her?

**Muriel Box :** Oh no, not worth the worry and trouble you had with her.

**Sidney Cole :** Why was that do you think?

**Muriel Box :** Temperament.

**Alan ? :** Genuine temperament?

**Muriel Box :** Yes. I said once when we had a scene to do with her and John Gregson, we were rehearsing a scene between her and him, it was quite a long one. Anyway we were rehearsing it and she was carrying on about where she should go, making no bones about it, and, "My God man", I thought as I sat there! I tried to be sensible about it with her. I said, "Either I must insist that she goes this particular way because it will ruin the scene if she doesn't, for once I must have my way." I thought, "Either it will be the finish of me or the finish of her, one or the other of us, so make up your mind", I said to myself - I never said anything to her. Anyway, I said to her, "I've really worked it all out Shelley, would you do it like this?" And I insisted on her doing it like this and we got through the scene, it was quite a long one. She always insisted, the moment there was any altercation about the way the scene should go, on coming to the rushes. Everyday she'd come and insist on seeing the rushes. And she did, and I sat at the back with my editor and I thought, "What the hell is she going to do this time?" She always used to sit in the front, and she came running up the steps to me afterwards and she flung her arms around me. A most extraordinary woman she was.

**Sidney Cole :** She was pleased in other words?

**Muriel Box :** Yes and she was genuinely pleased when we finished the film, though it was fairly successful.

**Sidney Cole :** It leads me on to ask about a general feeling about actors, they can be rather like children can't they?

**Muriel Box :** Oh yes, besides, I understand that. I have great sympathy for them, if they have great feel very deeply about a thing. After all, they're going on the screen, they're carrying the picture, they've got to take the brickbats, so they've got to be careful about what they do.

**Sidney Cole :** On the other hand, as the director, you see the whole picture whereas an individual artist sees it solely from his or her point of view.

**Muriel Box :** As was the case with her and not only that, always the eternal question, always when I did anything in pictures, I was a woman director, there had never been one before, at that time, there were tons afterwards. I had to fight that everywhere and the one that was hardest to fight was in 'Simon and Laura'. Did you see it?

**Sidney Cole :** That was difficult was it? Who was in it?

**Muriel Box :** Peter Finch and her [Kay Kendall], there was a whole series of people, you know them.

**Sidney Cole :** But Peter was alright wasn't he?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, but she got cold feet really. She'd just done a musical with the musical artists then, there was a very poor reception to it I think and she'd had a lot of time out of work and she came to me and I thought she was exactly right to look at for the part and could she play it, and I thought she would be if I could help her. So I went to her the first day of the picture, I went to her dressing room, she's just been made up, I said, "Look Kay, please come and see me if ever you're doubtful about any of the scenes and how you play them, just come and see me, I'll help you and we'll go ahead, but please do come and see me if you want help." So she shut up and said, "Oh dear you don't want to play this do you? You think I can't do it?" That's how she assumed it, she took attitude the whole time. It was awful, but the person who the one suffered from it was Peter Finch, he got cold feet, he didn't think I could do it because he hadn't seen me directing before. It got so bad, they went to Earl St John and more or less intimidated that if I went on, they didn't want me to direct you see. I spoke to Sydney about this. I said, "It's awful, I can't carry on like this with her saying..." Well, she was most difficult.

**Sidney Cole :** So what happened?

**Muriel Box :** He said, "Call a meeting, we'll all carry on and have a meeting together and discuss it, it's no good going into corners talking about it afterwards." So we called them all together. I said, "How do you feel about the film?" and when we got them all talking about the film, she suddenly said to me - this was Kay Kendall - tears started to flow and she became very emotional, "I've never been directed by a woman before!" I said, "Oh that's it!" It made me furious. I was so furious about that, I'd never had an artist say that before because she couldn't really have any foundation for it.

**Sidney Cole** : And very strange coming from a woman.

**Muriel Box** : Yes, you'd think they'd support you.

**Sidney Cole** : How far did you felt prejudice against you as a woman director because it was a pretty rare thing in those days.

**Muriel Box** : Oh, I can't tell you any amount, long before that, I can tell you instances. I think there's one mentioned in my book.

**Alan ?** : 'The Truth About Women', that was a problem.

**Muriel Box** : Not in that way though. The other one was from the Air Ministry, I think I mentioned that in the book.

**Sidney Cole** : What happened there?

**Muriel Box** : Well I was helping him with all his publicity films that he had to, and I wrote scenario of a subject that had come to him from the Air Ministry, and had asked if he could compass it and get a script ready and we'd discuss it. So he came home to me and asked if I could write the script. So I did, I sat down and wrote the story and he sent it up to the ministry and they said come up and see us. So he went up to town and had a long chat with them and they said, "Yes we like the script very much." So he said, "Very good", and they talked about how they would make it anything that was relative to the script and they'd exhausted all that they wanted to and then - I've got his letter somewhere - he said, "Sydney, I'll let you know as soon as I've made up my mind." He said, "Yes the scripts very good, but we don't know anything about Muriel Box doing any film work, how do we know she's capable?" He said, "Well I think you'd find she was, what I know of her," he said, "I'd like her to direct it if you don't mind." So he went home. We waited about a fortnight for the decision whether he was going to make the film and it came in the end and he'd written saying he really didn't feel justified offering it to me as I knew really nothing about my work. So I really didn't have any chance to direct it so it went to Ken Annakin. He was starting his career in Publicity and that's he started and he took over, it was 'Road Safety For Children', which I wrote and it was made. But that was instance, straight away, not a woman, you couldn't have a woman as a director.

**Sidney Cole** : I suppose things are a little easier nowadays, but it was a hard thing then.

**Alan ?** : Well it's television that's done that really.

**Sidney Cole** : Yes there are a lot of good women directors in television now.

**Muriel Box** : Yes.

**Sidney Cole** : The next film I have noted down is 'Rattle of a Simple Man'.

**Muriel Box** : It was my last film.

**Sidney Cole :** What was important about that especially? Did you enjoy it?

**Muriel Box :** No.

**Sidney Cole :** Why was that?

**Muriel Box :** Why? I never thought about why.

**Sidney Cole :** You just weren't at home with it or something?

**Muriel Box :** I don't know why.

**Sidney Cole :** It was a very good title.

**Muriel Box :** Did you see the play? It came from a play I didn't write it.

**Sidney Cole :** Was that why then, because it wasn't your script, you didn't feel at home with it?

**Muriel Box :** What was so funny was that I was invited over to France to their festival which we've had for thirteen years, they'd run this festival and they run it for women directors all over the world and they can win the festival or not. They invited me over and I was very touched by it and I thought it was rather funny to be invited over, they were very generous, they paid your fare and all your expenses while you were there, and we were invited to see all the shows they put on, and we went over and we got towards the studio, and the woman who was travelling with me, she'd come from Russia with a film that she'd made and the other person who was with me was the director who had directed for Korda. What was her name, I forget every name....

**Sidney Cole :** Was she British?

**Muriel Box :** Oh yes,

**Sidney Cole :** Oh I know, she did 'The Stranger Left No Card'.

**Muriel Box :** That's right.

**Sidney Cole :** She was dancer, she also did 'The Seven Days of Christmas' - Wendy Toye!

**Muriel Box :** That's right, she was there. They gave me an awfully nice time there, they run four of my films, four of them about two or three times during the week, I was very touched by it.

**Sidney Cole :** What did they run?

**Muriel Box :** Oh, the one about women police, and 'The Truth about Women' and two others.

**Alan ? :** 'A Prince for Cynthia'? 'A Novel Affair'? 'Eyewitness'?

**Muriel Box** : 'Eyewitness', I'm not sure about that.

A 'Subway in the Sky'? 'Too Young to Love', 'The Piper's Tune'?

**Muriel Box** : 'The Piper's Tune', I was just thinking about that. you've just tripped a nerve, that was the title of an ATCC about the children.

**Alan ?** : You didn't show that there then?

**Muriel Box** : No.

**Alan ?** : 'This Other Eden'?

**Muriel Box** : 'This Other Eden' was the Irish film.

**Sidney Cole** : Did you show that there?

**Muriel Box** : No.

**Sidney Cole** : Well it was nice to have films shown there. So 'Rattle of a Simple Man' was your very last film. We always ask this question, we usually get the same answer, if you had to start all again, would you do anything different?

**Muriel Box** : No, I wouldn't do anything different. I can't think of anything anyway. All that you're doing in film is always the best you can do at the time and I think anybody who refuses any other ideas from any part of the group who's working on the film should always be listened to and if they have very good suggestions, they should be tried. I've had some wonderful help from the artist and the crew, you've got to know the judgement of the director, if he knows his job, he should be considered, he shouldn't be ignored.

**Sidney Cole** : Yes, you should always listen, you can encourage someone even if you don't actually use the suggestion.

**Muriel Box** : Yes, I don't know what I would have done without some people.

**Alan ?** : What I'd like to talk about was 'The Truth About Women' and the problems you had with that. This was the dark side of Wardour Street.

**Muriel Box** : Oh you remember the end of it, the showing of it, it was disgraceful. I thought it had a lot of humour in it, but it's not the type humour that ...

**Alan ?** : The men in the grey suits...

**Muriel Box :** I can't describe it, I can only say it was the type of humour Peter Rogers was really successful with, and you know what kind of humour 'Carry Ons' have, if you like that type of humour, you don't like my films.

**Sidney Cole :** So what happened with the Wardour Street people?

**Muriel Box :** It had enormous publicity when we were shooting because it had a whole host of stars and they were all playing in it. So they expected a different type of film, like Peter Rogers, they said it was that type of film and it wasn't, it was very subtle.

**Alan ? :** It was a send-up wasn't it?

**Muriel Box :** You saw it didn't you?

**Alan ? :** No, I was reading about it, I got it from there.

**Muriel Box :** Yes, it was a lovely cast. I had Cecil Beaton do the sets.

**Alan ? :** Did you ultimately get a West End?

**Muriel Box :** Yes we did ultimately.

**Sidney Cole :** Did you get on alright with that star-studded cast?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, all of them. There weren't any troubles in the shooting at all.

**Sidney Cole :** It was just in the marketing then?

**Muriel Box :** When we showed it I was absolutely astounded, they didn't want to comment or say anything about it.

**Sidney Cole :** They just didn't know how to exploit it?

**Muriel Box :** They didn't know, they hadn't met what type of film it was, it was so unusual, it was peculiar. I remember the letters I wrote to Kingsley about it, because they were uncertain about it and when the notices came out, they were astounded because they'd shown it not in the West End at all and the people knew the film was coming out and they waited for it, the press and so on, and they said it was extraordinary.

**Sidney Cole :** Yes, the industry can be its own worst enemy in that respect can't it? The people who are supposed to say what a good film it is that their selling are the people who give it the kiss of death sometimes. Nobody else does that, the people who manufacture biscuits don't say, "Don't eat out biscuits because they're not very good" do they? The film organisation seems to do that.

**Alan ? :** I read the quote from review out of the Daily Express that you included in the book.

**Muriel Box :** Yes. It's extraordinary, people queue to see other people, but this one didn't even get one, we don't even get invited to the press show. They weren't invited to the press show so we all got together and said, "We'll pay for our seats", so they went off together and they paid for all of them and they gave it a wonderful review. I was so pleased because I didn't go after seeing the show with the press boys at the Rank's group. I said, "I'm not going again to this because I'll be pulverised", and of course the reverse was the case. It was really my original script idea from start to finish.

**Sidney Cole :** That must be your favourite film is it?

**Muriel Box :** Not the favourite I've seen, but I certainly think it was my favourite from the point of view that I wanted to say something and I said it in the film, I didn't hide it under a bushel.

**Sidney Cole :** So what was your favourite?

**Muriel Box :** I think 'The Seventh Veil'.

**Sidney Cole :** It was tremendously successful, it launched a new style of films in this country didn't it?

**Muriel Box :** It was most peculiar, yes, the effect it had.

**Sidney Cole :** And it created careers for the artists in it.

**Muriel Box :** Well we had no trouble with that with the artists, they were very, very good. I think it really made James Mason because I think he had a struggle with the rather second-rate films that they offered him and they didn't know how good he was until then, he just persevered and went on.

**Sidney Cole :** He was aware of that later was he? Was he grateful?

**Muriel Box :** Oh yes, he was a friend right until he died. He came over and I met him at some festival I went to and he was very friendly. I liked him immensely.

**Sidney Cole :** He had a great persona.

**Muriel Box :** Yes.

**Sidney Cole :** Would you have liked to have gone to Hollywood and tried to see how you got on there?

**Muriel Box :** Well that's what I said to my agent Christopher Mann. I said, "Look Christopher, now you see I have, with 'The Truth About Women' and some others, I've got some exceedingly good notices." Because I had, I could show him, "If we ever go to Hollywood, could you give me some introductions to people?" He said, "What for?" I said, "I want to be a director and if any of your directors come from Hollywood and say they are going to make a film there, I would like to

be considered, in view of my work." He said, "My dear, I'll tell this you truthfully, if was to suggest it, which I won't in future because there's no point in it. Whenever I've tried to sell a woman director like yourself on a new picture, I draw a complete blank, so I've not done it lately." It was after I think I'd shown the film about the women police, it got a very good press and it was very successful. He said, "Whenever I start to push the Americans on anything, they simply go and walk to the window and look out of it and they don't take a blind bit of notice of what you're saying, so I really can't say I'd be successful for you as much as I would love to." So I never got any help from him at all.

**Sidney Cole :** Well it was very difficult I suppose in Hollywood in those days for any woman to get a chance to direct.

**Muriel Box :** Yes there were only two.

**Sidney Cole :** Ida Lupino made it of course.

**Muriel Box :** Yes, but not much, there was one who was most successful out there.

**Sidney Cole :** You had very good relations all those years, after that business about not having a union card, you got on very well with ACTT?

**Muriel Box :** Yes I ran their branch for a time. I know one of the artists came asked, "Can you get me a ticket?" And that was the comedian, a very good comedian...

**Sidney Cole :** Who was that? Can you remember?

**Muriel Box :** He was a famous one?

**Sidney Cole :** A recent one? Did he get his ticket?

**Muriel Box :** Eventually, but I had struggle for it for him. I had many tussles with the union. It was when I was doing 'The Truth about Women', there was nobody there who was good enough for the sets at that moment, designers, so I put forward Roland Whiteside, he was excellent if he was given the chance. So I said, "Would you give this man a ticket?" Because he said, "I have no ticket and they won't have anybody without a ticket", so I approached them and I had an awful struggle, but eventually got it and he managed all the things that we wanted perfectly well.

**Sidney Cole :** Is there anything else you want to say before we terminate this very interesting interview?

**Muriel Box :** Well I think on a general basis, I think women in all their dealings, people have to work like everybody else, they have a raw deal from the very beginning. You can't cite any profession where women don't come second, that's what I have to say as I have found it's true.

**Sidney Cole :** You had a tough time proving it in the beginning didn't you?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, but women would come to me from the editing department on films knowing I was there if I could help them, and I always did if I could possibly help them, and we used have them ourselves, if we had a film we wanted an editor to do the work and there wasn't one there, so we'd have a wrap round and ask if the head of the department would put forward anyone they thought was suitable for directing a film. Whenever that was done, every time, if there are any men or women who wanted to do the directing, they put it down and sent it out to the manager and they said, you can bet your bottom dollar, if you're recommended and a man whose got an equal record of what they've done, you can be absolutely certain the man will get the job.

**Sidney Cole :** Plainly that's true and it still has to be fought for today. Things have improved generally for women, apart from films, they still have to watch out don't they?

**Muriel Box :** Yes, I was wondering what it was like in films, so I went one day - I had to do something for them - I had my very good editor, she was a woman.

**Alan ? :** Who was that?

**Muriel Box :** Jean Barker, Barker's wife, George Barker's wife.

**Sidney Cole :** When you knew her she was originally, when George was at Den Labs and they were married and Marty was deputy in charge. I've spent a lot of time myself being an editor and women are very good editors. I think there's something about the editing process that women seemed to be particularly adept at. Did you ever know Thelma Myers?

**Muriel Box :** I've heard of her.

**Sidney Cole :** She was a very good editor.

**Muriel Box :** The one in Germany, she had a terrific reputation.

**Sidney Cole :** You don't mean Leni Riefenstahl do you? Well she was a bit too fond of the Nazis, but she certainly a brilliant editor. She did 'Triumph of the Will', the film about the Nuremburg Rally and also the Olympiad. She wanted to work here because Paul Rotha became very friendly with her and Paul wanted to get her a permit to work here but that was too soon after the war for someone so associated with the Germans.

**Muriel Box :** That was a pity. It's so odd why they can't have the grace to say, "We know we have all the good opportunities as men to direct and do everything." Why they can't give women a chance, they haven't any confidence at all in them, they never say to women let us try and see what she's done. Right into my last film, which is interesting, they didn't want a woman director on that last one, so Sydney dug his heels in, and he said, "I'm very sorry" - he was approaching the starting date - "If Muriel's not going to direct it I'm afraid I'm not going to make the film." If you don't have support as strong as that you don't get any jobs. Fortunately, they gave in, but it's horrible to start that.

**Sidney Cole :** That would be the message you would give women than? That they must really stick out?

**Muriel Box :** It's not so much that they must really stick out, those men who are in charge - it was always the front office, I never had that from artists, except for the one I cited you, Kay Kendall, and it was only because she had very poor notices on her last film.

[END OF TAPE] Muriel Box, Lady Gardiner, film director, film producer, scriptwriter.