

**Wales Documentary Support Network
Transcript
Episode 2 – Catryn Ramasut**

Introduction

(Intro music starts – cinema film reel whirring, and countdown beeps)

Hello and welcome to the Wales Documentary Support Network, a podcast that celebrates non-fiction filmmaking. In each episode, our guest will share their tips on how to make award-winning documentaries.

I'm your host Angela Clarke, and this series is a Screen Alliance Wales & Wheesht Films Partnership, made with the support of the BFI Doc Society Fund.

My guest today is producer Catryn Ramasut, co-founder of Cardiff based company ie ie productions. Catryn's first film, **Separado**, picked up *CPH:Dox's Sound and Vision Award* in 2010, whilst her second film, **American Interior** went on to win the *Best Music Documentary Award* in 2015 at Barcelona's *In-Edit Festival*.

In 2017, her third feature **Queerama** premiered at *Sheffield Docfest* and told the story of an extraordinary century of gay experiences, whilst her fourth feature, **Rockfield: The Studio on the Farm** picked up a *Grierson Nomination* for *Best Music Documentary*.

Catryn and I discuss her approach to producing films, the challenges she's navigated during her feature doc career, and the necessary qualities you need to cultivate to become a successful documentary film producer.

I hope you enjoy listening... *(music ends)*



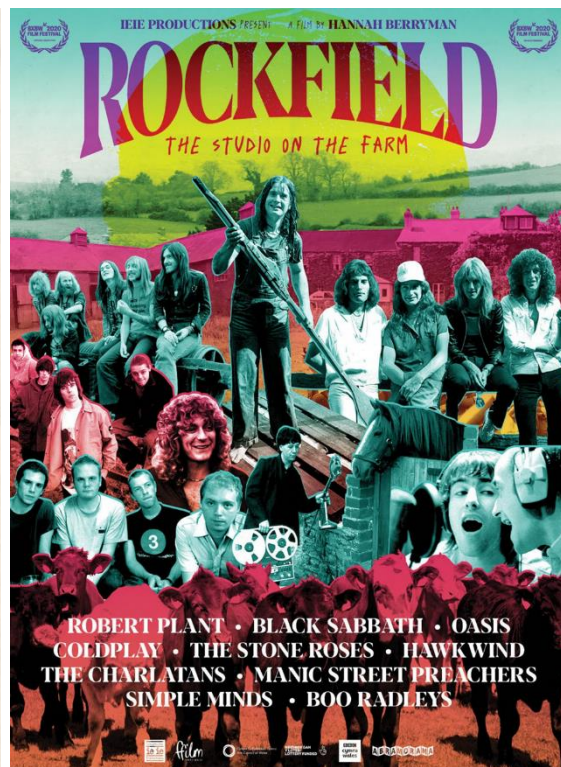
Separado (2010)



American Interior (2014)



Queerama (2017)



Rockfield: The Studio on the Farm (2020)

Angela Clarke - Hey Cat, how are you doing?

Catryn Ramasut - I'm good thank you. I'm a little bit sniffly this morning, even though it's boiling as always.

Angela Clarke - Well I speak fast, so we can power through, open all the windows, and get the fans back on! *(laughing)*

You've be making feature docs now for probably 15 years I would imagine, but I just wondered, before we start to talk about the individual films, what got you into the world of documentary filmmaking originally?

Catryn Ramasut - Well, I did an anthropology degree, so I guess I had some interest in ethnographic film. We watched some very long films, 3-hour long films about bleeding cattle and the Nuer. And the tribes of the Western Irian Jaya and the warring factions, so I got a taste for it there, I guess. It was pretty old school, watching those kinds of ethnographic films, but it gave you a framework in which to consider the way that they had been made. And I carried that through my degree...

Angela Clarke - Mmm....

Catryn Ramasut - I worked at the BBC and did some documentary work there. I started at the bottom, being a researcher, and learned about the production process. Then I worked for Radio One as an entertainment news reporter. I learnt about taking a journalistic approach and storytelling there.

Then I made my first radio documentary via Radio One which was called ***Bitch***, which is probably a completely inappropriate title now, and I wouldn't call it that today, but it was about reclaiming the word *bitch!* It was about females in hip hop, which was a great one with Missy Elliott and Salt-N-Pepa. So that would have been my first proper documentary for radio. It kind of grew organically. I never said explicitly I want to make documentaries.

I was actually working in advertising when Griff my partner said, I want to make this documentary, and I was like, "Ok I've got the skill set to do that, let's give it a go," *thinking* I had the skill set, but not really having the skill set.... *(laughing)*

It was proper guerrilla filmmaking. We were like right, "We're going to do this! Who can we ask for some money?" The Film Agency for Wales existed back then, so around 2007/2008 we set up the company to access a very small amount of funding and then we set off from there. Griff had an idea of the story....

Angela Clarke - That film was ***Separado*** wasn't it, and that ended up being released in 2010? So just to give people a scale then, so you're already starting to gestate that idea then in 2007?

Catryn Ramasut – Yeah (*laughs*). It took a long time because we were all working on other things. The team was myself, Gruff Rhys and Dylan Goch. Dylan and Gruff co-directed and they have a long running creative partnership from Gruff's days in the Super Furry Animals.

Angela Clarke – Mmmm.

Catryn Ramasut - They had done a lot of visuals for the Super Furry Animals like making videos, so they had a very good understanding of each other, and how they liked to work.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - Gruff was painfully aware of having a camera crew around, so it was just us three, and then we wanted someone to do sound. Sound is so important, and so I coerced a friend of mine, a female sound woman, who was exiting being a sound recorder. I made her basically come with us (*laughing*) to Patagonia. We were a very small, tight knit team. It was a learning curve for all of us.

Angela Clarke - I think you win a prize for best synopsis, certainly on Amazon, because when I read it, it said 'Star Trek meets Buena Vista Social Club in this psychedelic western!' I was thinking, you know everyone always says you need to get a really good like strap line, so that people understand what your film is...(*laughing*)

Catryn Ramasut – (*laughing*)

Angela Clarke - I was thinking, they've pretty much nailed it! Because at first you think, what? Star Trek meets Buena Vista??? And then when you watch it, you think that is pretty factually accurate. (*laughing*)

Catryn Ramasut – (*laughing*)

Angela Clarke – Describe what the film is about.... Can you expand on that strapline?

Catryn Ramasut - Oh my gosh. I think you've watched it more recently than I have. We go in search of Gruff's long-lost relatives in Patagonia, which is essentially a colony of Wales in Argentina.

Angela Clarke – Mmm...

Catryn Ramasut - And it's a like a musical adventure really. How did we describe it again? What was the synopsis?

Angela Clarke – Well, I'll give you the full synopsis. It says '*Star Trek meets Buena Vista Social Club in this psychedelic western musical as Welsh pop legend Gruff Rhys (Super Furry Animals) takes us on a pancontinental road trip in search of his long-lost Patagonian Uncle the poncho wearing guitarist Rene Griffiths!*'

The film sees Gruff starting out in Bala, and ends up with him travelling all the way through Argentina in search of this elusive uncle (*Catryn laughing*). But when I was watching it, I thought given it was your first film, you'd set yourself an ambitious challenge in terms of travelling across multiple locations, and multiple foreign locations as well. You're in the back of beyond, in a lot of the places that you were going too...

Catryn Ramasut – (*laughing*)

Angela Clarke - How did you manage to plan all that and what kind of budget were you looking at? The film itself, if anyone hasn't seen it, has a lot of fancy effects, grades, graphics, and animation. It looks like there would have been a lot of money spent on screen. So could you talk me through how that all worked? And, if you're happy to go through what you had for the budget, how you planned it.

Catryn Ramasut - Talking about a budget on this production is probably pointless because it was so small in terms of what was delivered and in terms of the ambition of the film and the fact that it had a theatrical release. It was a non-existent budget. We did have support from Ffilm Cymru Wales. But you know it took us years and years to make and it was all done on favours really. Dylan probably got paid for some of his time because he was co-directing and then editing over a hundred hours' worth of footage.

Angela Clarke – Wow!

Catryn Ramasut - And then Angharad probably got paid something for coming on this mad journey with us. But then the rest of it went on hiring the kit that the penguins broke on our first day, our PX100 or whatever it was called back then. I think we got about £50,000 from Film Agency for Wales and then Sony, who Gruff was signed to at the time, gave us a small amount. So, in terms of the budget, I don't think it was more than £60,000 altogether. And as you pointed out...

Angela Clarke – Mmmm.

Catryn Ramasut - The level of work that has gone into that film far exceeds that budget. Pete Fowler did the all the graphics.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, they were good.

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, they're beautiful, aren't they? He went to town on them. He'd hand painted everything, and designed a whole letter set for us.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - It's got a very beautiful graphic style to the whole film. Then Bait Studios, which was Paul Nichols back then, again, another long-time Super Furry's collaborator. They designed the opening title sequence, which was amazing as well. Everything that appears in it, any of the animations or any graphics were designed by a team of long-term collaborators who were in it....(*pauses*) for just being in it.

Angela Clarke - For the passion really...

Catryn Ramasut - We're very fortunate and I guess that's the kind of story of most people's first film as well. You ask your friends for favours and then you hope you can go on a longer-term journey with them, so you can eventually pay them properly.

Angela Clarke - Well that's the thing, it's always that eternal conundrum. Even though Gruff had a big profile, was in a well-known band, which should offer assurances in terms of a potential audience that will come to the film, it's still never a guaranteed bankable thing though is it? People imagine that you'll get loads of money, but the reality is you don't even when things are financed.

Catryn Ramasut – Yeah. I wasn't that type of producer thinking who's going to watch this or what do you do once you've made a film. We were just young, and we wanted to make a film. This was a good idea.

You asked about shooting internationally too. Well, we had to go to Patagonia to be able to try and track down Rene Griffiths. But Brazil was an added element when Gruff went off and did something else with someone, and then he said Dylan you should come to! They went off on this adventure and that made it into the film as well.

The film was made over several years and there were hundreds of hours of footage, so it wasn't well thought out. There were a couple of sequences... *(pauses)* I know what we spent money on, the blinking horse sequences in North Wales! *(laughs)* That was the money shot, filming with animals, in North Wales, in the peeing rain! Then your camera stops working because the rain is coming in sideways. That's where all that went.

Angela Clarke – *(laughs)* When you look back on that, because obviously you're a few films down the line now, but when you started that project, and you thought we can totally make a film. How do you reflect on it now when you look back? Do you think we didn't really know anything then? Did you understand the process of setting up an SPV for example? There's are so many complicated things to get to grips with. Especially if you don't study film. You may stylistically understand what you want to achieve in terms of how you tell the story. But all the other stuff that comes with it. Where do you begin; you know what I mean?

Catryn Ramasut - Well exactly! We just jumped in. I didn't know anything. I think I must have gone to Film Agency for Wales and said can we apply for some funding, and they were like, *"Do you have a company?"*, and I said, *"No, but I will set up a company."* Then I turned to my god brother, who was a lawyer at the time, and asked could he help me set up a company He set up a company, again another favour, which was ie ie Productions. That wasn't an SPV, and that's now turned into our main company because you start something and then you see it through.

I didn't know what an SPV was. I just needed a company and now I'm going to apply for some money. Here's a budget, here's a plan of what we think we're going to do. Gruff's

writing all this music on the hoof....It's going to tell the story; we're going to go on this adventure. You will learn a bit about Welsh history in an entertaining and engaging way. But we were young, and we didn't map all of that out in the way that I do now.

It was real guerrilla filmmaking. We we're like right, where are we going to go? We've got some idea of the places, but we met people along the way. We got to Trelow in Patagonia and Gruff' said I really want a school bus to cross the desert...

Angela Clarke - *(laughing)* Okay, yep, sure!

Catryn Ramasut - He said I've seen one, and we thought well I don't know if we're going to be able to make that happen. We're only here for a couple of weeks but they've got some great old cars and we spotted one and we thought well *that's* a good one. We left a note on the car. That's how we got the blue van in that film!

Angela Clarke - Um, yeah, yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - We just left a note asking can we use your car. We'll give you some money for it. We'll take it and bring it back...*(laughing)*

Angela Clarke - I promise to bring it back...*(laughing)*

Catryn Ramasut – Exactly! And then we thought we're going to have to put some wing mirrors on this truck now! So off we go to find a garage. It was quite literally winging it. Then Griff had a lovely cousin, like a million times removed, that we met in the Touring Club so Cecilia then joined us, and she became the official translator.

Angela Clarke - Um, yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - There were no fixers. There were no translators. It probably wasn't the right insurance. We literally winged it...

Angela Clarke - Nobody died, and you lived to tell the tale so you're fine.

Catryn Ramasut – Exactly!

Angela Clarke - It's a good lesson. As I was watching it, I was thinking I wonder how much footage they had *(laughing)*... Because you're always watching with your producer's head on, and I was thinking I bet they shot loads...

Catryn Ramasut – *(laughing)*

Angela Clarke - When you do your first film, if you've got enough tenacity, you can cobble things together, get by on a wing and a prayer, especially on the journey part of it. Almost having no shame to ask can I borrow that or getting people on side. And I think when people see that you're enthused about an idea, they're usually quite generous aren't they with their time.

But when you come back and you start to think, we've got a hundred plus hours or whatever you had of footage....

Catryn Ramasut – *(laughing)*

Angela Clarke – Are you now thinking how do we start to load or log this stuff? Do you remember how long that process, the edit part, took you? Can you vaguely remember?

Catryn Ramasut - About 18 months.

Angela Clarke - So was Dylan just doing it in and around other jobs? Was he doing it, and then leaving it for a bit and coming back etc?

Catryn Ramasut – Yeah. He had a room down in Douglas Studios, so he had his edit set up there. But it was cut in between jobs. Griff had at that point, done some storyboarding so he had an idea. Griff is good at telling a story. So, I think once we'd shot it, and we knew what interviews we had, it was easier. Also you've seen it, it's like a long music video as well.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, yeah.

Catryn Ramasut – It took us ages to shoot it because those two would just think this is a great place, in the middle of the desert, this is a great place to shoot that song!! And I'm like, “*Oh I'm so hot, please could we not do this*”, but they're saying “*But it's going to look amazing*”, and then there's an armadillo, let's get that... *(laughing)* I mean there was absolutely no schedule...

Angela Clarke – I was going to say, were you thinking your 12-hour day has been exceeded could you just hurry this up!

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, there was none of that, everyone was on board with that. It was just like we're having fun with this. We want to make it; they want to make it as creative and as psychedelic as possible. But, trying to control those two when they are going off on one, that's what makes it a great film because you feel all that creative energy that comes through, that comes with youth.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, and you get that sense of their personality, don't you. That's part of what that film is. They're not going to be two people that are going to get up in the morning and say we've got our schedule and we're just going to really stick rigidly to this! That's obviously not their vibe *(laughing)*, it's not the energy they're giving off.

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, getting everyone out of bed was another thing. I would be saying there was supposed to be a team meeting at 9am and everyone's like, we'll be down at 10am! I was thinking this is going well! The producers got full control – Not!! *(laughing)*

Angela Clarke – Were you thinking shall I bring the team meeting upstairs to the bedrooms? I guess it's learning how best to work with your talent! Once you got through that edit, who

was it that distributed that film? I take it you maybe wouldn't have known much about that end of things, the distribution process at that point.

Catryn Ramasut – No. To take a step back, with regards to the edit we were well supported by Keith Potter from Film Cymru Wales (*laughs*). They would occasionally just ask us how it's going and we'd be like ah.....yeah okay.

Angela Clarke – It's going!!

Catryn Ramasut - Well, it's coming together you know. They would pop into our crazy little studio and say, “*Ok, so how's the film going to end?*”, and we were like, “*Oh well we haven't got that far yet*”, and they'd suggest you might want to think about how it's going to end because we hadn't found Rene at this point. We've been over the whole of Patagonia and not to spoil it for anyone who hasn't watched it, but you need to watch the end because that only happened after we finished everything else.

Angela Clarke - And that's why sometimes those kinds of docs are difficult to fund these days aren't they?

Catryn Ramasut – Yeah.

Angela Clarke - It's a risk averse industry and people always want to know where the story is going to go. You can understand things from both sides of the team. But it is annoying when you get good stories like that, where you think, you will have to just wait and see where it takes you. But, at the same time funders are thinking are we going to have a film? Do you have a start, middle and an end etc....?

Catryn Ramasut - To be fair Ffilm Cymru Wales are amazing at giving you the creative space to do that. They've always supported our ideas. Of course, we have an idea, or what we think is an idea, but it always changes and that's why it's amazing that they exist as an organization. To fund those kinds of films and give people the creative space to make something a little less commercial and corporate. In the age of the corporate doc, people need that space to be able to explore interesting subject matters, whatever they might be.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - And to let that creativity expand as they go on. They have always been supportive of that, allowed us that space but also guided us very gently (*laughing*)

Angela Clarke – As they leave, casually say, “*Maybe next week you'll have an end then?*” ... (*laughing*)

Catryn Ramasut – (*laughs*) No pressure, but just let us know. Also, they were the ones who would say have you thought about a distributor yet. And we would think what's that. Or what's a sales agent? What's the difference between a sales agent and a distributor?

Angela Clarke - I'm still not sure I know if I'm honest! (*laughs*)

Catryn Ramasut - I'm like errhh! Or they would ask about festivals. Have you got a festival strategy? *(pauses)* No, no. We thought we just need to make this, but they gave us advice on a festival strategy and the boys got to go to so many amazing festivals. The film got into *CPH: Docs* and won the *Sound and Vision Award in 2010*, it was in the *Los Angeles International Film Festival* which then meant they went to the Lucas Studios Ranch for some master classes.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut – They went to Guatemala...*(pauses)* It went all over the world. And it was special for them because they got invited to go along and people were really into it.

Angela Clarke – Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - It was a good festival film.

Angela Clarke - While you lacked as a team that forensic film knowledge you build, once you get a couple of films under your belt, you did have energy and enthusiasm and tenacity, which ultimately let's be honest, is what you need to make any film...

Catryn Ramasut - Yes.

Angela Clarke - To get anything across the line, whether you've got funding or not, because it is a long and arduous process. So once that's done well, and probably by the end of that process, you've got a much better sense of how parts of that should have worked, and this is how you do it next time around, do you do it slightly differently?

Catryn Ramasut – Yeah. Just to say *Separado* did get a sales agent through Content Sales which were one of the bigger companies, but they had this new Welsh branch called Content West or something...

Angela Clarke - Yeah, okay.

Catryn Ramasut - And they picked up *Separado* and they did sell it as part of other bundles. I think it got tacked onto other packages they were selling around the world, so it did get some distribution. I guess that's important because if you make a film and nobody sees it, there's no point making it

Angela Clarke – Well you've just made a film for yourself then haven't you really?

Catryn Ramasut - There was cultural value to it, which was important, and it was seen by an audience, who appreciated that I believe. And it's a historic record of a certain time in Welsh history.

Angela Clarke - I didn't know about the whole Patagonia thing until I moved to Wales, because you don't necessarily learn that in mainstream history in the UK.

So when did you start developing the next film *American Interior*? Had that been mulling around for a bit? Or did you have to wait till you had some success with *Separado*? How did that pan out because it's the same creative team isn't it?

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, so at this point we're all at least 7 years older from when we'd started.. (laughs)

Angela Clarke - Slightly broken... (laughs)

Catryn Ramasut – Ha, that right. We've got more experience and have lived it and breathed it. Then Gruff had this idea for a trilogy of getting closer to his family, so that one was about a long-lost uncle and then further back was this other relative, John Evans. He wanted to tell this story of John Evans. Again, it was Gruff's idea and from our learning from *Separado*, we hadn't released all the music that was on *Separado* as a separate soundtrack yet, and so it would make sense to do that.

But with *American Interior* Gruff's he wanted to tell, he wanted to do this kind of investigative concert tour of America. He wanted it to be a little bit more structured, a bit more formal in terms of the way we travelled around and the things we were discovering and therefore how those feed into the film. Plus, the music was a narrative driver as well...

Angela Clarke - Right.

Catryn Ramasut - He was writing songs as we went to places, and they were pushing the narrative journey along. Again, that was Ffilm Cymru Wales and S4C, with Llion Iwan who was at S4C at the time. They came on board because we wanted to have an English and a Welsh version. Again, overcommitting for the budget that we had, which meant re-recording all the voiceover and Gruff re-recording the music and doing Welsh language versions.

But S4C have got a Welsh language version of that film and yes, we stuck with the same team. The budget was a bit higher, but again it was super ambitious. This time because the music was going to be a standalone soundtrack, Gruff got his American booking agent to book a tour. We plotted out the route we wanted to do, the same route we knew that John Evans had taken, and we did gigs along that route. It was exhausting.

Not only were we shooting for the film, but we were also shooting every gig that Gruff did. It was long days and the whole crew, again only small crew, Ryan Eddleston was the DOP and Dom Corbusier was on sound, as well as me, Dylan and Gruff. We travelled on a converted articulated truck as well...

Angela Clarke - As you do!

Catryn Ramasut - We were like a band on tour, but we were also the crew. So that was quite intense for everyone. Crossing America, doing a very long arsed journey of America in bunk beds and having your DIT on board as well. Set up a gig with three cameras, pack it

down, do all the DIT, travel to the next place. Wake up the next morning, start shooting again. That was a three-week shoot....

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - Following a touring band route essentially. But again, there was lots of space for those moments, those improvised, unexpected mad moments. Like when they met the tour guide in the cemetery in New Orleans. She was the one who said John Evans, the puppet/avatar that we have was very much what they do in New Orleans, and we would have to give him a ceremony, a send-off ceremony which is how we ended up back on a hill in North Wales giving him a big New Orleans send off!

Angela Clarke - I was going to say we should just explain just a bit about who John Evans is really..

Catryn Ramasut – Yeh sorry.

Angela Clarke - We got side tracked there.... So, he was a farmhand wasn't he, from Snowdonia who had travelled to America and was trying to discover whether there was this Welsh language speaking native American tribe, is that right?

Catryn Ramasut – Yeh, there was a mad bunch of London Welsh poets and Iolo Morganwg who liked to smoke a bit of opium it's believed, had who'd heard there was a tribe in North Dakota. Obviously, it wasn't called North Dakota then, but apparently they could speak Welsh. Prince Madoc had gone there in the 12th century, so the legend has it. And John Evans was sent by the London Welsh in search of the lost tribe. And on the way he also became a cartographer and the map...

Angela Clarke - Ah okay...

Catryn Ramasut - That map we start off with in Connecticut, in the Benaki Library, that was John Evans's map. That's the map that also led Lewis and Clark to the Pacific. So, there's a known Welsh history in there as well.

Angela Clarke - All kinds of all weird and wonderful connections. It still got the same kind of like energy and vibe as *Separado* it just really stylized and has beautiful visuals. It's beautifully shot, with a very distinct look and feel...

Catryn Ramasut – Yup.

Angela Clarke – But it feels like there's bit more lick and polish on this film. How different was that process in terms of planning, like pre-planning and all those things that you did to get to those locations...?

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah....

Angela Clarke - Because it is more plotted out. How different was your role on that film in comparison to what you'd done on the first one?

Catryn Ramasut - It was in pre-production longer than *Separado* was. I had responsibility for more people. Because the backbone of the film follows the investigative concert tour...

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - Gruff had to be in certain places at a certain time. We needed transport to get him there, and accommodation and transport were considered. We had a tour manager Joe Pulio and his assistant Kelly helping in America, setting things up. And then Ryan was a DOP, Dom was on sound and then there was me so there wasn't a lot of us.

But Alice Lusher who now heads up the drama arm of ie ie production, she came and helped us set up because we needed carnet's and I-Visas and things like that to sort. Yeah, we must have had those! So there was a lot more pre-planning and insurance etc....

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - Film Cymru Wales were like what are you doing this time? You can only wing it so many times, and so yeah, it was a proper shoot but as I said, there was room for impromptu events still to be able to be captured. But we were following a schedule.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, there's more of a structured narrative of arc isn't there? You've got a starting point in your journey an endpoint in your journey and know where you're going in between really don't you?

Catryn Ramasut - Yes, and we had to work out how we're going to introduce John Evans the character into it to this as well. So, there was a lots of discussion pre-shooting with Pete Fowler who visualized John Evans and his outfits. And then there was Louise Evans who created John Evans, the avatar.

Angela Clarke - We should explain that John Evans is, I was going to say a doll, but that's not quite the right word... What would you call it?

Catryn Ramasut – Puppet, or kind of an avatar? It sort of looks like something out of Sesame Street!

Angela Clarke - Um, yeah, yes. It does give off strong Sesame Street vibes, in its facial features. *(laughing)* Have you still got that?

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, he's in a box somewhere. But he did a lot of traveling poor old John. His role developed as well, as we went along. We didn't know what he was going to do when he was created. But his role grew and grew within the documentary as well. So that was an added complication, filming him all the time as well, doing some puppeteering!

Angela Clarke - I was going to say, I bet they were good call sheets to read objectively - like I'm sorry you're doing what with the doll!

Catryn Ramasut - Oh no, I don't think they were planned (*laughing*).

Angela Clarke - Having had *Separado* go to film festivals and having seen how that worked from a sales agents and distributors perspective, with *American Interior* had you given more thought about where it was going to end up or what film festival you were going to take it to? Did you think it would going to go the same kind of festivals that *Separado* had gone to? Or was there more ambition?

Catryn Ramasut - Well it started out as a film and an album. And then Gruff was friendly with a literary agent, Nemonie Craven, and she was like, "Oh that's an interesting story, let me pitch that around to the publishers." And then Penguin were like, "that's a great story, we'd like that as a book as well." So, we've gone from film to album to book and then the guys were like, but we want to experiment with a digital version of the narrative as well.

So, then we are now making an app and we were thinking how are all those things going to hang together? How do you access all those things? And we had to have a shop as well, a website where you could purchase those things as a bundle or separately. Each industry has a different...(pauses)

Angela Clarke - Yeah, remit.

Catryn Ramasut – Films are in the cinema, an album in a music shop. There wasn't Spotify or anything at that point, and a hard back book or an audio version of the book and an App. From the outset, our learning had been from *Separado* that you use everything you create from the beginning, all that metadata, from the first sketches of what John Evans is going to look like, to the storyboarding that Gruff did. The planning of the tour, all those elements can be used in some way to help you promote everything that you're doing.

Quite early on we were like SXSW (South by Southwest Film Festival) would be a great place to launch this because you've got the innovation and technology side of SXSW and then you've also got the film and the music. They all run concurrently one after the other in Austin, Texas. We thought that would be a great place to premiere it *and* all the music so that's what happened.

We had about 30 international stakeholders I was trying to coordinate. The sales teams from the film and the record label and the publishers, plus the people making the app and this whole website. It was a very big step up from *Separado* in terms of managing stakeholders and the different teams internationally. Initially we thought it'd be great if our digital strategy all came out on one day. But then, the more we dug into that I realised music comes out on a Friday, books come out on a Thursday, and films come out on whatever day of the week, so that's not going to work. Then we thought we could run it across a week instead. It was constantly evolving and being truly multiplatform, the stories were told in a different way on every single platform, so there was attention drawn to that.

But we financed each one separately. We cross collateralized the marketing but not the financing because I just...(pauses)

Angela Clarke – Was it just too complicated?

Catryn Ramasut - The legal's on that would have been horrendous and basically, I decided I'm not doing that, best keep them separate.

Angela Clarke – And what was the biggest thing that you learnt as a producer on that project?

Catryn Ramasut - That I might have bitten off more than I can chew! (*laughing*) No, that's the classic! It was so much learning because again, it was a much more professional approach to filmmaking. Let's say it was more structured. I had more responsibility. Similarly with the music, it was co-ordinating a lot more people. It was a management and relationships communication exercise. And strategies! Having those digital marketing strategies and implementing them and trying to get it all out there.

Angela Clarke - How long did that one take in edit if you can remember?

Catryn Ramasut - So we've got very long-term support from Cinematic, our post-production house down in Mount Stuart Square in Cardiff. Gareth and Matt have always supported our creative endeavours, however, mad they think we are. They gave us a space upstairs above Sound Works. Simon Jones who did the sound and does all our sound for these features he gave us an office upstairs.

We had an initial, I think 18 weeks to begin with of Dylan. But Dylan doesn't like to do a paper edit so he's got a different way of working. I was thought if you can't keep to a schedule then that's up to you. You do it the way you want to do it. And then Chris Morris who's a Professor at Falmouth University now came in and helped with a bit of story consulting when Dylan wanted to bat things around. Gruff and Dylan would just spend hours putting some sequences together, to see how they worked. It was slightly more structured, but again Dylan likes to work in a particular way so I just left him to it. And there's way more animation in *American Interior*...

Angela Clarke - Yeah, yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - So that needed managing and again with Bait, they always do a beautiful job. So that was that process. I imagine it took about four or five months; I can't remember in detail. I'm not like a 9 to 5 person; you do what you need to do around your family life in order to make it work for you.

Angela Clarke - So that film does well and launches at SXSW. What other film festivals did it go to? Did this film have a bigger run of film festivals because, you'd had one under your belt, so you knew how it worked?

Catryn Ramasut - Well, you'd like to think so wouldn't you, but it's never kind of a linear learning curve. It did go to lots of festivals, *Hot Docs* in Canada, *Indie Lisboa*, *In Edit*, in Barcelona I can't remember off the top of my head, but we had an international run.

Angela Clarke – Yeh.

Catryn Ramasut - Again, we didn't get a sales agent but probably due to my inexperience, and not maybe pushing hard enough. But I think I was probably exhausted at the end of the process, and pregnant if I remember rightly. You know, we'd made all these different elements and I was just like urgh, nobody picked it up, so it didn't get the sales. It is on iTunes, and Soda represented it again in the UK. Soda Pictures don't exist anymore I think they became Thunderbird Releasing. It had a UK release in the cinemas here and in Ireland, but not internationally.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, it's such a complicated process. I mean even when people have film degrees or they've studied producing, it is still such a complicated world. Because each film's slightly different in and of itself isn't it, and the market evolves, and platforms evolve and what you can do with the film constantly evolves so it's a constant learning process as with every film isn't it.

Where do you begin with that? How do you plot that out? As you say its lessons learnt. Once you have one under your belt, you think okay next time we know to plan that a bit earlier, or do that bit further along the lines etc isn't it?

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, it's also relationship and reputation building as well. People want to know who you are what you've done before.

Angela Clarke - Yep.

Catryn Ramasut - And it's about advocating for yourself a lot of the time and that's exhausting for a producer. At that point, you're not getting paid for any of that work. I was talking to another producer yesterday, a docs producer, and he's got a film out now, but again he's struggling to get a sales agent. You do all that work, the producers do all that work, then just that last piece, it is the biggest, most taxing and most unrewarding bit right at the end. From my perspective anyway the un-fun bit. The sales bit is the not fun bit!

Angela Clarke - Yeah, and by the time you get to the end, everyone's a bit, not broken but everyone's tired and you've been on it a long time etc. Is there a slightly different skillset needed when it comes to sales and distribution? How did you start to kind of navigate that?

Catryn Ramasut - Um, possibly by my third film *Queerama* which was like the fastest turnaround film ever. The BFI and the BBC wanted to fund Daisy Asquith's look back at 100 years of queer British cinema.

Angela Clarke - Yeah. Made up of lovely archive they had taken from different iconic films at the time. And that was that because that was launching in the year that marked the legalisation of homosexuality anniversary, wasn't it?

Catryn Ramasut – Exactly, so that was in 2017. I think they approached me in January or February and said we want this to be the opening night film in Sheffield. I was thinking that's just three months away!

Angela Clarke – Jeez..

Catryn Ramasut - So that was an absolute baptism because it's all archive. And I had misunderstood, classic! I thought the BFI have got a huge archive, that's it. We can just use the BFI archive. Brilliant, that's straightforward...

Angela Clarke – No....

Catryn Ramasut - But that's not how it works. You've got to research all the titles that you want, not just from the BFI but we needed some from the BBC as well.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - And then you must work out who owns all that footage. It's not all signed off to the BFI. There are 3rd parties, etc. When Daisy started doing the research with Mike and Campbell X, and they worked out what titles they wanted to use, it became more and more apparent to me (*laughing*) this was a way bigger job. Financing it had been straightforward because the BFI, the BBC and Ffilm Cymru came in to support the film. And whilst it was low budget, it was it was a good learning experience because I got to work with the BFI and understand how they....(*pauses*)

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - How you go through the process on something with them, let's say at a lower pressure than if it's a bigger budget film or say a narrative feature.

Angela Clarke - Well it was a containable film wasn't it because it's all archive...?

Catryn Ramasut – Exactly...

Angela Clarke - And you're just assembling a story from the archives, so you don't have what you've had in your last two films going off travelling where there's more logistic, more on the ground logistics. But this is a baptism of fire...

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, it's a pure archive film, but it was also making a feature film with a different musician as well. Daisy wanted to work with John Grant because they had a relationship. I was working out what music we were going to use from him and other tracks as well. So licensing, not only the archive, but also licensing the music so that was a lot of legal stuff. And then as you say getting a sales agent on board and learning about territories and rights and who's going to do what, with which deals etc. We went with a company, a Canadian company called Syndicado, they did international sales. BFI had the rights for the

for the UK. But that film is very niche. It's very specific and it had over a hundred festival runs across the world, but it was also time specific as well. So yeah....

Angela Clarke - So you have a tighter window haven't you to show that, compared to your other docs, because they're more lyrical in their style, more landscape-esq, and historical stories, which offer a longer shelf life.

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, this was specific to a period and celebrating that. But it was a learning curve in terms of carving out rights and who's having what etc. But having the BFI support and guide on that as well, so each time I do a production, I learn more and more and become more skilled in the negotiation of music rights, or in the negotiation with archives.

With those libraries, you had to do some serious negotiation with the BBC and Getty and approaching people to allow us to use films from 60 years ago, when you don't know who that person is. Or getting the actors to agree to it as well because they've got 3rd party rights in them. So **Queerama** was good experience, working with an experienced director who had very clear creative process in how she themed and then structured the film. It's always a pleasure to work with Daisy.

Catryn Ramasut – I went to Goldsmiths, to watch her graduates, her master's graduates' short films last week in London which was interesting and had a little catch-up. Then after **Queerama** our fourth feature was **Rockfield - The Studio on the Farm**.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - Which was with Hannah Berryman directing, again another experienced female director. But that had a different journey. She came to me with that idea. And I know Rockfield well, having been there quite a few times and...

Angela Clarke - Well maybe just explain a little bit about what **Rockfield** is in case, people aren't familiar with it. Maybe tell us a bit more about what that tale was.

Catryn Ramasut - Rockfield's a studio in Monmouth. It's fifty years old now I think, coming up. It's been the place where some of the biggest bands in the world have recorded music but it's one of those little-known secrets that needed to be exposed and brought to the fore. Hannah Berryman brought the story to me, but it wasn't like nobody else had ever tried to tell the story before. Lots of people wanted to tell the Rockfield story. But the family, the Ward family who owned the studios, hadn't been open to telling their story until Hannah approached them.

Angela Clarke - I remember when I saw the trails for it thinking why nobody else had tried to make that before, when you look at the legacy of the bands. I mean massive names, like Robert Plant and Oasis and the Stone Roses had been there so it almost seemed like that was such an obvious one.

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, I know quite a few people have tried to tell the story and the BBC were not convinced that we'd be able to tell that story either. But I think because of my background in music management and in the music world, I had the experience and the contacts within the industry to be able to make it happen. But we had to convince them that we could do it.

Angela Clarke - And by make it happen, you mean what they didn't think that you could get everybody from those bands involved or was it just clearing rights for the music because obviously you've got a big number of high-profile bands there? Or was it or was a combination of everything that they just thought we love the idea, but we don't know if we could get that pushed through?

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, they weren't convinced because I think other people had pitched it to them before. But getting Oasis, Coldplay, Ozzy Osborne, Queen - who we didn't get, but Robert Plant and the Stone Roses, the Charlatans etc.

Angela Clarke – The Manics...

Catryn Ramasut - Simple Minds, all those big bands. And *then* also clearing that music so you can use it in a low budget feature documentary. Most people hadn't managed that, but I felt confident that I could do that, and music documentaries was something that I do, so I knew what to do.

Also, I understood how musicians work and with Hannah getting the family on board, the good faith was there. And all the bands who had been to Rockfield had gone because other bands had been there, and they wanted to go because that's where the Stone Roses had lived for two and a half years. That story needed to be told, but it needed the family to tell it and then we needed all the bands to agree to tell their stories and be very generous in allowing us to use the music as well.

Angela Clarke - So with this when you're adding another layer of complications again because you're now dealing with big, massive music rights. You've also probably got some visual challenges too, because whilst there will be some footage of the bands that have been there, be it personal or owned by the farmer or whoever else that had it, it will be scarce. Also with that one, because you've got to get big people on board, did you have to do a cut, like a 15/20-minute taster cut to help get that that money in?

Catryn Ramasut – Definitely. With *Rockfield* we went through a more formal process. Hannah and I worked up an idea together. Once we'd nailed the access with the family, we thought who we can approach to get them to be on tape to help raise the financings and develop it.

We did the traditional development route and Ffilm Cymru Wales again gave us a pot of money to be able to develop the film and to cut a taster. We did a bit of filming with the family, the Ward family on the farm. Robert Plant very generously did an interview and then and we went all in, and decided we needed Coldplay.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - If this is going to work, we need Coldplay. You know obviously different people have different feelings about Coldplay. They're a bit like Marmite, but to raise the financing for the film we needed a big name. We waited months and months and months to try and get Coldplay on board and then just out of the blue they were said yeah you can come to Chicago next week.

We said okay! They had just been on a UK tour in Europe, yet they wouldn't give us 15 minutes with them in Europe, but now we have to go all the way to Chicago! But we took it and blew most of the budget on getting everyone out to Chicago, getting a team on board. We needed a couple of cameras. We knew this was our one shot at Coldplay. So, we had to get a pull a team together out there. Hannah and I flew out and we recorded a great interview with Guy and Will and then one with Chris Martin on his own.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - And then we came back and cut a taster together and with that we went to IDFA in November 2017 or maybe 2018. We did the pitching forum. We had our whole presentation together and we did the roundtable pitch and in classic style, it all fell apart. None of the technology worked. You couldn't watch the taster. We couldn't do our slide show, so we just had to wing that as well...

Angela Clarke - Excellent, excellent!!

Catryn Ramasut – But we got interest from there, we got presale with Arte France which was very generous at the time which helped us bring the finance plan together. We had Ffilm Cymru Wales, BBC Wales, Arte France. The company put some money in and then tax credits too.

We managed to pull that together over the next twelve months, I think. You know nothing ever happens quickly. I think IDFA is in November and then we started shooting the November afterwards.

Angela Clarke - So that's taken the best part of a year, or a year and a half since Hannah first came to you and said I've got this idea? Is that what we're talking about, just to get to that point where it's like we've got our ducks in order now?

Catryn Ramasut - Two years, yeh two years, and then a year before that getting everything together.

Angela Clarke – And so when you started to film, had you already got the sign off from all the other people you were reaching out to? Had you started that process and you thought okay, we've got X amount of them in the bag, or did you do that concurrently as you started to film?

Catryn Ramasut - No, no, no, this is the thing working with rock stars. It's a matter of you don't tell us, we tell you (*laughing*). Ozzie Osborne, for example - we were like how do we get Sharon Osborne to agree to this? And it was Kingsley the farmer/owner of the studios who said, Ozzie's always said you should make a film about this place.

I thought that's better coming from him than a request from me. We got him to film a little video and then I somehow managed to track down the right person within the management team to show it to Ozzy and they were like yeah okay, we'll do it. And so again that was a down tools, we need to get to LA on the 4th of January or whatever. It wasn't like we were block filming. We could block film with the family. And we tried to do the interviews with the musicians in a block, but you know...

Angela Clarke - Yeah, that's what I was going to say, does that make it challenging from a budget perspective then...

Catryn Ramasut - Yes...

Angela Clarke - Because everybody probably knows if you managed to get 6 or 7 interviewees over a two-week period then it's one flight in, one flight out isn't it. But with that kind of stuff, especially when it's the Coldplay scenario where you're like, it's a week notice, so a long-haul flight costs more. How do you manage that? With your producer head on at the beginning of that process do you think okay, in the worst-case scenario if everybody's going to be like right, you can film in 2 days' time type of thing...

Catryn Ramasut - Um.

Angela Clarke - Do you have to ring fence a big chunk of cash and hope you can make it for that? Is there a thought of we've spent more getting into that place than we thought, or we can't get it sorted or whatever else because especially with America with carnet's, it's not the easiest place to get in and out of speedily.

Catryn Ramasut - Well we used an American crew on that we didn't take anything with us. But you know as a producer your budget is always a live document, you're always moving things here and there.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - I didn't really know how much the music was going to cost for each track. We didn't know which tracks we were going to use. Obviously, Hannah had an idea of the big tracks that she would like to feature in the film, and these are the musicians etc. We needed to get at least this number of people to make this work. Hannah was always quite clear about that, what we'd need.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, so was there a minimum and maximum number ideally that would be the dream scenario, but we could live with this type of number of guests?

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah, so Noel and Liam Gallagher. We wanted both, but they don't even talk to each other, so it was either or, and it kept on switching between who was free. But we got one of them in the end. We got Liam so that was good. Liam and Bonehead. Ozzy we really felt he needed to be in there to tell the early story of Rockfield. Coldplay covered the 90s, but we knew we'd never get the Stone Roses. We tried and tried but Ian Brown doesn't do interviews, so we knew what we we're playing with...

Angela Clarke - Um, yeah, yeah.

Catryn Ramasut – But it was never a sealed deal kind of thing. Similarly with the music. You budget your best version of a budget and then you just have to shuffle it all around as and when things move. When Coldplay came in first with the music and gave us an amazing deal, that set a precedent for everyone else.

Everyone was doing it because they really liked the Ward family and there was a generosity of spirit there because everyone wanted to make that film happen and to be fair, I don't think they would have done it just for any producer and director. We had to convince them that we were the right people. The Ward family had our support, and they gave us their support, so we went out as a team. The family who'd given us that access is very well liked by all the musicians who go and work there.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, there's a warmth because of the way that studio was run, and there was as an intimacy too, because I'd imagine the people that ran the studio almost felt like an extended family to a lot of those bands. Plus, it felt like a lot of those bands grew up there...

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah.

Angela Clarke - You know their music grew there and so you got that slightly mum and dad-esq vibe. Kind of a bit like having eccentric relatives really...

Catryn Ramasut - Yeah.

Angela Clarke - From memory that film was probably due to do its film festival run just as Covid hit then wasn't it?

Catryn Ramasut - So yeah, again, that was meant to premiere in SXSW in 2020 and we were literally about to get on a plane in March and suddenly it was just like we're not going anywhere. That was devastating. You put all that work in, and we'd been holding back committing to a sales agent at that point because we wanted it to premiere, we wanted the buzz, and we wanted to choose. This was the first time that we were going to get to really choose who we wanted to work with and that didn't happen, and that year was just terrible for film really.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut – For anyone who had a film coming out. Because we didn't get a theatrical release and because we had broadcaster money, we'd committed to having a festival window and then a theatrical release in the UK and then it goes on TV. But by July 2021 it was kind of you've missed that now. We just didn't think it was going to ever happened.

But we are working with Outlook Sales Agents in Vienna who are great and who have sold the film all around the world. They're selling it internationally to Abramorama in the US to Mad Men in Japan, and Australia etc. I can't remember all of them. But in the UK, because it's been on the BBC, they hold the rights for 5 years and it can go on iPlayer, if they show it again for 30 days. That makes it's very hard to get a distributor to pick it up. So that's one of the things about having a UK broadcaster, you pretty much lose the UK and Ireland.

Angela Clarke – Yeah, your distribution rights....

Catryn Ramasut – And because it didn't go into the cinemas, we are working now to get in on a digital platform like iTunes or Amazon so people can watch it. But yes, it's the BBC and the way that they've um...

Angela Clarke - Yeah, the way their structures are set up. Well that's the complication isn't it because it's so hard to get money even though as a story, it's set in a small Welsh location but the story in and of itself has mass appeal because you've got all those big bands that are known around the world that have come to that that location so by its very nature, there's going to be lots of people interested.

You would have thought it would be a good film to sell, so it must be just gutting when you spend so many years making it and then something like Covid, which nobody could have predicted just bowling balls in. It's hard for everybody involved in that because it's not what people want. You made a great film and want people to celebrate it and share it as much as possible.

Catryn Ramasut - Um, yeah, and it's even more challenging now to get a broadcaster on board or a streamer because all they want is a doc featuring a celebrity or someone well known. For documentary film makers, it's even more challenging. I went to Sheffield Docfest recently, and it was inspiring, I watched mainly female led narratives. I watched the Lyra McKee documentary about the Irish journalist and that filmmaker had access to the family and a relationship with them, and everyone wanted to get on board with that film. I'm hoping that will have a good festival life. And then I watched the Sinead O'Connor one as well.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, I haven't seen that yet, I'm dying to see it.

Catryn Ramasut - Again, that's record labels and different people bringing in different sources you know, but they're two very big stories those two films. And the other one I saw was a German film, and they've got loads of money in Germany to make documentaries. Their whole development process was like, wow you got all that time to do this...

Angela Clarke – Craft it...

Catryn Ramasut - And structure it like a drama. Essentially, they did casting. Months and months of casting for their lead influencer I think it was called ***One in a Million***.

Angela Clarke - So you're doing another project though. You've got something in the works now with Hannah again?

Catryn Ramasut - Yes, yeah.

Angela Clarke - But you're still in the early stages with it. It's called ***A Womanly Way***, the story of Olivia Records so what can you tell us about that, if you can at all?

Catryn Ramasut - Olivia Records was a label set up in the 1970s by a group of young women and American radical lesbians, and they wanted to be able to make music for women by women.

Angela Clarke - Yeah.

Catryn Ramasut - And they didn't want any male involvement in that, so they had to learn to do it all themselves and make music for women who love women basically. *(Gets tongue tied)*

Angela Clarke - It's the heat, it's the heat! *(laughs)*

Catryn Ramasut - It's the heat, it's the heat! Yeah, but they called it women's music because at that point it was too dangerous to call it lesbian music. At their peak, they sold about half a million LP's. But this is a little-known story and its female history that has not been acknowledged and recognized and those women are still out there making music.

Olivia is now a travel operator, a lesbian travel operator and they do cruises, so the legacy continues. But just the whole vibe of the 70s, the politics of Miss America, with the glamour of ***Twenty Feet from Stardom*** and the music they made. They were radical in the way, and they didn't want to be white folk singers. They wanted to diversify it and they had more rare groove and smooth soul. They had black women who were involved, black queer women and they faced a lot of challenges. They had a Trans woman working for them as well. But a certain faction was not digging that, and there was a big drama around that.

So, we want to tell that story but that's an American story so we're in the process of applying to take that to different markets, to pitching forums. The process starts again and that'll take us another two years before we get anywhere near shooting I imagine.

Angela Clarke - Well that's the thing isn't it. It's just how you juggle and weave those things isn't it, when people have got to do paid work to be able survive. To get those stories told is a long slow burn, isn't it? But then part of me thinks, you should only make projects that you're enthusiastic about, because otherwise it takes up such a lot of your time that you might never get fully paid for, part me thinks well in for a penny, in for a pound. You might as well make something you really care about!

Catryn Ramasut – *(laughing)* Yeah, it is tough, and you have to really, really be into the idea because it is a slow burn. Feature docs are a slow burn. And you need to be committed to them because you're lucky if you get paid for what you do, you know it's always the producers fee that goes first.

Angela Clarke - Yeah, well, that's the thing people just think you can live on dust don't they, you just need dust don't need anything else! You don't really need food to feed those children of yours!

I was going to ask; you've also recently got involved in a short called **Forest Coal Pit** which I think was Sean Marshall Waters film isn't it?

Catryn Ramasut – Yeah.

Angela Clarke - And so you had some good news this morning in terms of that's been shortlisted for Grierson Award, hasn't it?

Catryn Ramasut – Yes, that's fantastic news, that popped up this morning on the Twitter feed. Alice Lusher was the one who really wanted to help them tell that story because she's from that part of Wales where that way of life is dying out on remote farms run by families.

Angela Clarke - So it's about two elderly brothers that live together on a farm up in the Black Mountains. Again, a kind of small quirky story but with bigger universal themes. And it's quite poetic as well. Why choose a short doc then because you've done a lot of feature docs traditionally? Did you just think it would be nice to do something that's slightly less complicated? What was the vibe? What drew you to that, or was it just the subject?

Catryn Ramasut - It was the subject for Alice, and we knew Sean, he'd come and taken some photographs for us, some behind the scenes photographs on another production so we had a relationship with him. We felt that we could exec produce it that rather than produce it, Jessica Wheeler produced it. And we're about giving back as well. We want and we need new talent coming through and if we can share some of the learning that we've done on the way to the point of making a feature then we're happy to do that.

Angela Clarke – Yeah. And so, to sum up, what's been the biggest thing that you've learnt as a producer? If you were to give somebody a piece of advice that was just coming into the game and starting off, what would you advise them to do or what would you tell them to think about in advance that you've learned by stealth from the kind of things you've made?

Catryn Ramasut - I guess I'd not taken any kind of direct route into producing. I've done a lot of different things and my skill set has grown over a long period of time, through different forms of media. I think I would have benefited from going to film school. I didn't really think NFTS was an option for me. But I think that would have given me a lot more of the skills that I needed to be a producer rather than learning on the job. Obviously, that's not an option for everyone and I didn't think it was an option for me so and it would have been very expensive. But I think just get involved. I guess just start doing it. I mean if you work in TV that's a good place but working in film and TV is very different and people need

to understand that if you want to make films, yes, you can be more prescriptive about the way you want to make something. But it's not like working in television. You're making something for a broadcaster.

In film, you get to make more decisions for yourself. But then don't be under any delusions that you're going to get paid for doing it. If you raise money to make your film, then you're doing well. I think it's about managing expectation and learning not to have high expectations for anything really and you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Angela Clarke - You seem to have done projects that you really cared about, and I do think that makes a massive difference because it takes a while and a lot of that time you have to spend sharing your enthusiasm with other people along the way. Whether it's convincing somebody in the back end of Patagonia to be involved in something, or it's convincing somebody at a market in IDFA to fund you or give you £20 quid here or there, whatever it is we do along the way to beg, borrow, and steal etc. It's keeping that enthusiasm up isn't it.

I suppose ultimately probably the biggest lesson that anybody learns is that doing that first one, if you can survive that, and you still want to do it again at the end of the process, I think that's a good marker that you're probably doing something you like. Plus having tenacity. That is a massive big deal isn't it?

Catryn Ramasut – Yeah.

Angela Clarke – And not getting jaded along the way as well.

Catryn Ramasut - I guess *Separado* was our version of a short film. You learn by making short films and we just jumped in and went for the feature because we didn't know a short film would have been an option I guess (*laughing*)

Angela Clarke - A less painful version of it... (*laughing*)

Catryn Ramasut - Exactly go full out straight from the beginning. You know that's a classic ie Productions approach to things. But short films are there for a purpose. Start small. Go to Ffilm Cymru Wales. Do those Beacons Films or wherever else there is, those short film opportunities and do the learning.

Angela Clarke - Well, that's it. There's nothing better is there. Just ask, I think when you reach out to people, they are usually friendly and will share their information. Nothing ventured, nothing gained isn't it!

Catryn Ramasut - There is, but I think you must be realistic that short films and low budget films, nobody's making any money on those, they are a commitment and a passion because you believe in the people who are making it. And so, we were all in it together and just be mindful that everyone's in the same boat, however experienced they are. With *Forest Coal Pit*, that was Shaun's vision and we supported him in that vision. We're happy that it's doing so well and it's a beautiful film, but it was a passion project for everyone.

Angela Clarke - So It's just a case as you say of sticking in and going at it, and not being blighted when things don't go the way you think they will along the way, because that's part of the adventure isn't it. That's what you learn.

Catryn Ramasut - It's about being flexible and adaptable. That's what a producer needs to be and like you say have the indefatigable nature that when you get knocked down, you are going to have to get back up again. Keep going!

Angela Clarke - Just keep turning up with your schedule chanting please get out of bed before 10am everyone, I beg of you, I beg of you, it's the last day of filming. We've got 975 pickups to do, please somebody get up I beg of you!!!

Catryn Ramasut – *(laughing)*

Angela Clarke - Well listen, thanks so much for your time. It's been lovely to speak to you, much appreciated and good luck with ***The Womanly Way***, I hope you get your funding in soon and you can get cracking with that.

Catryn Ramasut - Thank you! Thanks Angela.

Angela Clarke – Take care.

Thank you for listening to the Wales Documentary Support Network Podcast. If you want to keep up to date with our new episodes or show your support, you can subscribe or leave a review on all major podcast platforms.

And if you'd like to know more about our guests, then head over to Wheesht Films or Screen Alliance Wales' social media accounts – on Instagram and Twitter.

This was a Screen Alliance Wales & Wheesht Films Partnership, made with the support of the BFI Doc Society Fund.