



Life in the Tree House



## April

We're starting off the month with a mountain of Easter Eggs and another get-away. This time a road trip to Glasgow and Northern Ireland for a catch-up with the fam-a-lam. It's always lovely to go back and spend time with everyone and to visit all the little places we love. This month also sees our last 'back to school' after the Easter holidays, as our youngest is about to take her GCSE's and then that'll be that. No more school and the end of an era. College beckons and new adventures await.





## Artist Notes

I have rediscovered my love of doodling after scrolling through Instagram this week. I came across an account called @thecalmcreator. They create beautiful doodles and it reminded me of the Zentangles I used to draw a few years ago, so I dusted off a couple of books I have, and cut up some paper into 10cm squares ready to create something whenever I want.

It is a lovely practice to get into. You can decide how simple or complicated you want it to be, nothing is right or wrong. You can create your own designs or pick and choose from the many that already exist. You can add colour or shading. The list is endless and the lovely part is that there is no pressure so you can let your mind wander, listen to music or whatever you want. It really requires very little thought and is a great way to warm-up and practice your drawing skills. I've also just finished my first painting of Porto, which is a sketchy view of the harbour, painted on paper in acrylic paint and charcoal pencil, which you can see in my post all about our trip.



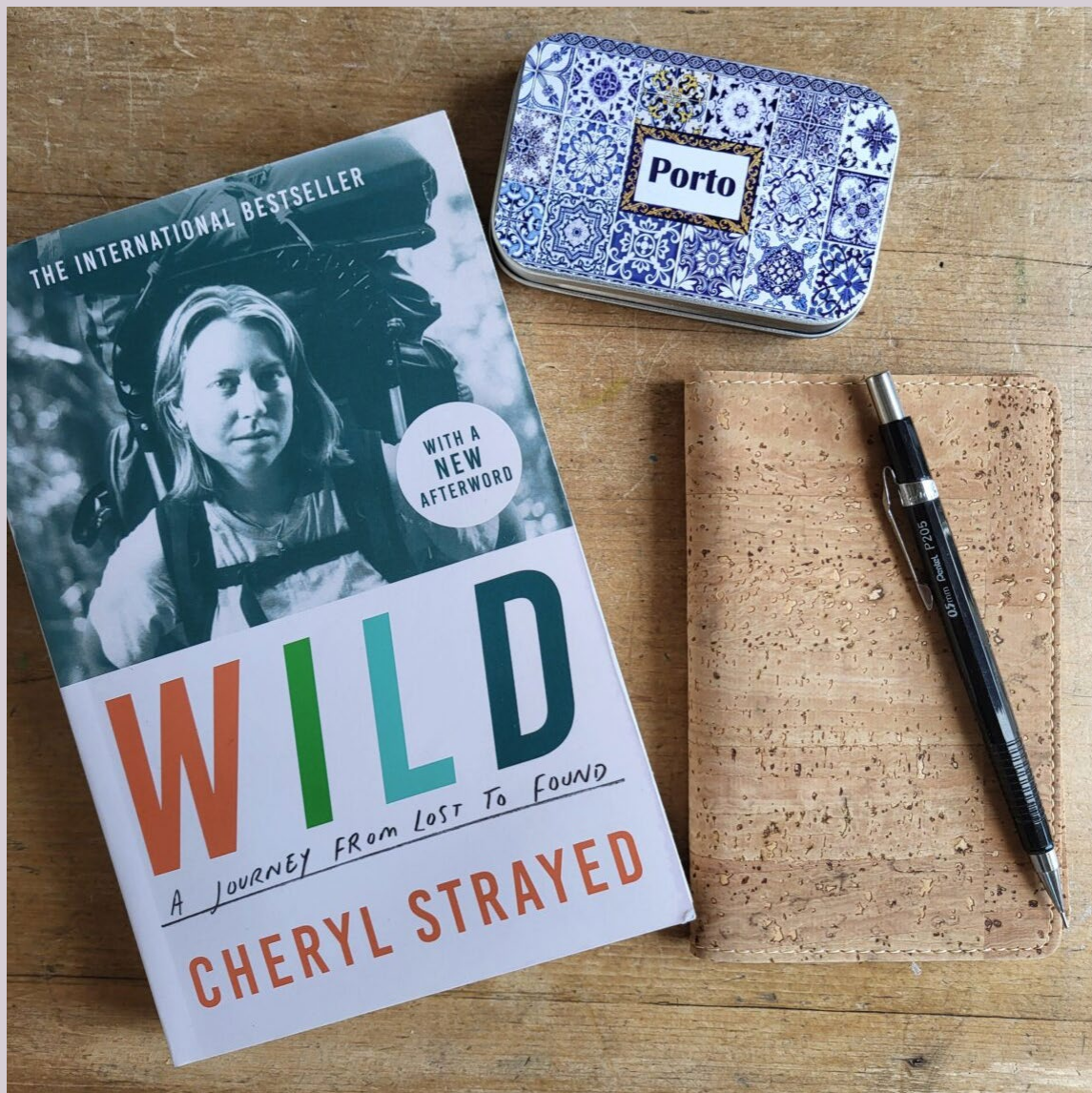
[Click to see Porto Blog](#)



## Spotlight On ...

The Bluebell Wood: Painted in the Spring of 2023 after a long walk through Esher Common with our dog Indie. It was one of the first days where it felt quite warm in the sunshine, but was still cool and damp in amongst the trees. The dappled sunlight picked out all the fresh new growth and there were bluebells everywhere. I had a fun play-around creating a couple of background layers with no expectations of what it was going to become. The first layer had some strong bright yellows, blues and greens, then on the second layer, I started to introduce more subtle shades of lilac, aqua and white. By this point, I had an idea of where this was going, so I began to create the outline of the trees allowing the background colours to show through. Adding light and shade and mixing some lush greens led to the final stage of some bluebell action and a bit of tweaking until I was happy with how it looked.





## What's Inspired Me

Well, the change of scenery and routine from our two trips has left me feeling all refreshed and ready to get going again. I have a few things on my list that I have to sort out and one of them is framing. I was watching a You Tube video of an artist that I follow the other day and that has made me wonder if I could make my own frames. I quite like a bit of DIY and it would certainly be a cheaper alternative than taking it to a framers to do. I'll have a bit of investigating and research work to carry out, but I'm looking forward to giving it a go and will keep you posted on the result! We've also got a meeting with someone this week about building a garden studio and re-jigging our kitchen and opening up the back of the house with some swanky glazing, so I really need to get my interior design head on the go so we know what we're talking about. We don't want to extend the house - it's all about maxing out it's usability without spending a fortune, so it's quite a good challenge.

# Just Finished Reading ...

Wild by Cheryl Strayed. I came across the author when I was listening to a podcast called 'We can do hard things'. She was a guest on two episodes 118 & 119, where she talked about how she came to write Wild and what had happened since.

The book is a memoir of her journey, having hit rock bottom, to find herself and start to rebuild her life again. She explained how, at age 22, she really spiralled after the death of her mother to lung cancer. The grief that followed caused her marriage to end, several dodgy lifestyle choices and an addiction to heroin. Then, when standing in line at a store, she spotted a book about hiking the Pacific Coast Trail and became fixated by this idea.

With no previous experience of hiking, she spent the next few weeks buying equipment and getting prepared for the challenge. The PCT runs for 2650 miles along the west coast of America and the book follows the author through her three month, 1100 mile, solo hike starting in the Mojave Desert to the Bridge of Gods on the Oregon/Washington state line. Her motto was 'I am not afraid!' although there were several scary moments, a lot of challenges, pain (several toe nails were lost!) and new friendships made along the way. It might sound like it's quite depressing, but it isn't, it's a story about overcoming problems and proving what you can do if you really put your mind to it.

There is also a 2014 film adapted from the book with Reese Witherspoon as Cheryl Strayed, which I shall be watching at some point.

Trees x

**Tree House Design**

Based in Teddington, West London

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