

It has been 2 years since I visited this Galloway farm and already as I enter its wilderness, the sky is ringing with birdsong including the skylark and the linnet.!!! I remember coming to this farm and only seeing row upon row of fields with no wildlife. My destiny was to help this farm bring back a highly threatened butterfly. The marsh fritillary. Previously the land was heavily overgrazed. The natural marshland had been drained out and the fences and walls were like uncrossable boundaries to the marsh fritillaries. All this had a devastating impact and wiped them out entirely. If this had carried on, it would affect other wildlife. To be able to reintroduce them, they had to make a suitable habitat covering 50 hectares. I thought that bringing them back would not be possible. As I walk through this transformed landscape, with no fences but tumbled down walls in situ, my feet sinking into damp marsh, I disturb a pair of curlews who fly into the air. Further ahead the grassland is being maintained by Belted Galloways. Although the grassland is difficult to walk through and my feet keep sinking into the marsh, the ragged-robins, buttercups and bugles colour the place with beauty. Insects swirl around and bees pollinate the flowers. The farm has created a wonderful habitat for the marsh fritillaries and other wildlife and I feel like the future is looking very promising. I hope this farm has inspired others to do the same. Just before I start heading back, something catches my attention. Flying past in a laid-back way, the sun catching its satsuma and chocolate wings, occasional glimpses of its white and orange underwings. An unmistakable butterfly suited to this habitat. My first marsh fritillary.



