



Severn Hydrotherapy Centre

Clooney had been involved in a road traffic accident in August 2013, sustaining a fractured pelvis. He was non weight bearing on his right hind. Subsequent to fracture repair in the right hind limb, function did not improve and neurological deficits became apparent. The vets suspected severe sciatic nerve injury (the main trunk of the nerve runs adjacent to the site of the fracture). In October 2013 radiographs showed the bones were healing, but Clooney still had no function (and reduced feeling) in his right hind limb. Surgical amputation was suggested by his vet.

At the end of October, Clooney came to Severn Veterinary Centre following a recommendation. After an initial consultation with Jock Queen (our orthopaedic surgeon) he was referred “in house” for physiotherapy and rehabilitation with Natasha Cooper. His right leg had become severely under-muscled.

To encourage use of the limb, Clooney attended the surgery twice a week for massage, passive range-of-motion exercises and stretches, followed by sessions on our underwater treadmill. This form of hydrotherapy assists rehabilitation, circulation, balance and stability, gait and posture, psychological wellbeing and pain management. The buoyancy of the water reduces the load on painful joints, improves flexibility and improves core stability. The water is warm which helps to relax muscles and aid comfort, relieves pain and increases circulation. Hydrostatic pressure assists circulation and reduces peripheral oedema (swelling).

Initially our physiotherapist assisted Clooney to place his leg and paw correctly. After a few sessions he was able to intermittently place it himself. His owner noticed changes at home such as Clooney’s ability to now sit un-aided (something he hadn’t done since the accident) and improvement in his general demeanour. By the beginning of November, Clooney was using his leg more, although he knuckled his paw at times. An elastic device attached from his toes to a harness was used to assist in correct limb placement. By December, Clooney no longer required this and placed his foot correctly by himself. He is now using his limb all the time, and enjoying running and playing like any happy and fit dog.

