

## **What Cambridge has meant to me during the last 20 years**

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The success of the Cambridge Diet in the United Kingdom for the last 20 years is a landmark in my career as a nutritionist. When I first approached the problem of obesity over 40 years ago, I realised that for any Diet to stand the test of time, it has to be very effective, safe and palatable. Thus it took 10 years research before it was launched into the public domain. Towards this endeavour I must thank my colleague Dr Ian Maclean Baird and his assistant Joan Fowler (who later became a counsellor) whose collaboration at the West Middlesex Hospital played an essential part in the early development of the Diet.

Luck played an extremely important part in my life. It was fortunate that the Feather family in California launched it first in the USA and chose the name "Cambridge". My brother Roger Howard was able to bring over his counselling experience and expertise and start the UK business. His friend John Bradley, and my son Jon Howard decided to work full time as team leaders. It gave me great pleasure at to see our UK company being extremely successful and I remember attending many training sessions at Sprowston Hall, Norwich, meeting happy and enthusiastic counsellors spearheaded by Paula Stokes, June Barry, Ann Coxon and Rita Shapiro and attending our Congresses in Slough, Nottingham, Blackpool, and Birmingham.

These early days were very exciting but not without serious challenges. Quite a few members of the medical profession were antagonistic to the idea of using VLCDs. However with the help of Sir (later Lord) John Butterfield, the Head of the Clinical School at Cambridge, Harold Shapiro, Steve and Sue Kreitzman (who came to join us from the USA) we were successful at long last in overcoming this fierce opposition so that the Cambridge Diet is well accepted and used by many doctors today. It will play a major role in combating the serious obesity epidemic in this country. We are indeed fortunate in having Peggy Bennett heading our approaches to the medical profession at this time.

The Cambridge Diet has been very successful commercially and I am extremely grateful to all the past and present staff of Cambridge Nutrition Ltd, subsequently renamed Cambridge Health Plan who contributed, and especially to single out the five managing directors Roger Howard, Alan Wallace, Alan P Howard, Alex Waterman and Eileen Skinner and at Cambridge Manufacturing Ltd, Corby: John White and Rob Thompson.

Through the help and collaboration of all the abovementioned people and countless thousands more, I was able to achieve my lifelong ambition of making a long lasting major advance in science and especially to contribute to the better health of our country. Very Low Calorie Diets are here to stay for many years to come because the problem of obesity is not going away just yet. The Cambridge Diet has a great future!