

Rooted in design excellence



OUTSIDE EDGE: The KMGD team (from L-R) Shelley Landale-Down, Fiona Rowles, Karen McClure, Fiona Northover and Annie Briggs

*Led by founder **Karen McClure**, KMGD has grown into a thriving all-female garden design studio with an enviable reputation for creating elegant, functional outdoor spaces shaped by creativity and collaboration. The TW Edit discovers more about this pioneering business, where many team members have embraced a second career renaissance by swapping office-based roles for life in the great outdoors...*

Team KMGD is an award-winning, all-female garden design studio thriving in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

United by a shared goal, they create beautiful, functional outdoor spaces with both passion and professionalism. Whilst the studio is based in Tunbridge Wells, their work covers central London and around the South East. Their project locations range from Knightsbridge, Oxford and the New Forest to the sunshine of Crete.

At the heart of the business is founder Karen McClure, whose journey into garden design began long before she formally realised it.

As a child, she saw her parents creating their own garden; her father sketching ideas on the back of cigarette packets - small, seemingly ordinary moments that quietly shaped her creative path.

Years later, while working at Goldman Sachs, those early influences resurfaced, fuelled by a growing scrapbook (before Pinterest was a thing) of inspiration and an obsession for plants.

A pivotal turning point came when Karen lost her father suddenly, just weeks before the birth of her twins. The juxtaposition of loss and new life brought everything into sharp focus, serving as a powerful reminder of life's fragility.

Inspired by her father's mantra of 'Live for Today' she made the bold decision to leave the corporate world behind and fully commit to her passion. With determination, resilience, and a

willingness to learn, what began as a hobby gradually evolved into a thriving business - humbly built from her kitchen table.

The company has grown organically, shaped by experience, curiosity, and a strong growth mindset. Without a formal business background, Karen developed her skills by studying horticulture, whilst also being in full time employment and then practically whilst on the job and seeking support in the local business community.

Tunbridge Wells Mums in Business became a valuable source of inspiration, encouragement, and connection with other like-minded women during those early stages of growth. And as demand increased, it became clear that this growth required support.

A key step forward came through Organised You, a virtual PA company. Embracing the philosophy, "You can do anything, but not everything," Karen began delegating strategically. What started as a few hours of part-time support 10 years ago, has since grown into a close-knit team of five, each bringing diverse skills and a shared passion for creating exceptional outdoor spaces. The team's collective strength lies in their varied backgrounds and aligned mindset.

Following a life-changing breast cancer diagnosis, Shelley Landale-Down made the courageous decision to leave a successful fashion career working with high-profile clients. She chose instead to pursue a more meaningful, outdoor-



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