



#### PROFILE

**RICHARD KEMP  
AND KAREN KEMP**

#### TITLE

**FOUNDERS AND  
DIRECTORS**

#### WEBSITE

**KEMPANDKEMPCATERING.CO.UK**



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## PROFILE RICHARD & KAREN KEMP

Attending four weddings in a single year was pretty exceptional for Richard & Karen Kemp. But in each of the four cases the food was memorable only because it was so awful. The hotels and restaurants in question were usually perfectly acceptable, even quite good with food normally. This prompted Richard and Karen to wonder what was it about simultaneously serving food for a great many guests that reduced otherwise good cooks to producing an offer that was anonymous and ordinary.

For Karen, with her lifelong love of great food, it was a turning point. At the time, Karen had recently begun her own food business, making and, with Richard's help, selling savoury tarts and pates on Farmer's Markets in the West Midlands ('The Local Tart Company').

Richard, an accomplished project manager in the heritage attractions industry, continued to re-build heritage attractions during this period for The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, re-building and re-launching three of their attractions in two years. In 2010, however, funding dried up in this sector.

Both had always wanted to run their own business but were wary of walking away from the benefits that are associated with paid employment - sickness benefits, paid holidays and apparent security. 2010 was different however, with falling pension prospects and a 'raggedy' jobs market in a failing economy. That year was a watershed. Richard and Karen decided that it was the right time to set up a business together.

With the memory of those four terrible wedding meals in mind, the couple decided that wedding catering was an area where they felt they could make a big difference. Initially Karen worried that the responsibility was too great. Richard's experience of running very large and complex projects, however, reassured her and the die was set for 'Kemp & Kemp Catering Ltd'. What was different about Kemp and Kemp was that they set out to replicate the intimacy of a dinner party meal in a mass catering situation.

Having made the decision to set up a new business, Richard came across The Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise (PRIME), a partner in Senior Enterprise, and recognised

*"the unique selection of resources and advice specifically for entrepreneurs aged 50 and over."* Having attended an INTERREG IVB Senior Enterprise workshop Richard said, *"These workshops are a key way for entrepreneurs aged over 50 to learn about businesses and are an excellent form of networking."*

Interestingly, the couple's business is based in Stafford, a place not known for its culinary reputation. In the early days lots of marketing was required. Locally, even regionally, there was little priority given to food generally, and weddings were no different.

Through research and Richard's experience of marketing and PR, the couple developed a website, Facebook page and a network of wedding venues that would recommend Kemp and Kemp. A network of small sub-websites were developed each with names that are designed to precisely match customer search terms such as 'www.weddingcaterersstaffordshire.co.uk' or 'www.weddingcatererswarwickshire.co.uk' (thus ensuring a good placing by 'Google' without the need for expensive SEO techniques) all link seamlessly to Kemp & Kemp's core website ([www.kempandkempcatering.co.uk](http://www.kempandkempcatering.co.uk)).

Richard also created a network of venues where couples can get married and use Kemp & Kemp to do their catering. These are captured in another website on [www.independent-weddings.co.uk](http://www.independent-weddings.co.uk). This brings the company, and all its partners, business, as well as ensuring there are upwards of 50 industry professionals each handing out the Kemp & Kemp Catering Limited postcard to prospective clients and, as confidence grows, recommending them as well.

Kemp & Kemp Catering delivered 6 weddings in 2010; 28 in 2011 (a 450% increase); and expect to deliver at least 40 in 2012 with 33 of these already booked (a projected increase of 142%).

Both Richard and Karen are self-taught and use the experiences gained in their former colourful lives to guide them. It's an exciting life for an ex-mortgage-broker/cook, ex-archaeologist/project manager who, in their early 50's have so much to offer, especially to foodies getting married.

