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Tattoos are gaining in popularity — with women as well as men. CHARLOTTE HOFTON looks at the implications of the Trafalgar celebrations on tattooing.

People do not do it on impulse

PHOTOGRAPHS
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Military tattoo just right for Trafalgar party

THE possibility of celebrations on The Island that will mark the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar sounds simply glorious and we must all make the most of our privileged position alongside the

Why not get yourself a tattoo in time for the celebrations? Tattoos are not only historically significant and traditionally favoured by sailors but are currently enjoying a surge in popularity among men and women of all ages.

You will, of course, want to lend the Trafalgar touch to your tattoo and depending on your pain threshold, you could choose anything from a simple 1805 date-design to a representation of the Victory, fully rigged and with all guns blazing. And you will naturally wish to visit the most suitable tattooist for your needs.

For the tattoo novice, there could be nowhere daintier than the Arora Tattoo Studio in Carisbrooke and nobody more graceful than Lisa Forde, who runs the business from the comfort and privacy of her own home.

The room where she works is the latest word in chic hygiene, all white walls and modern lighting, with her dyes and instruments arrayed in shiny order.

"You should make your working environment ergonomic," she says, which greatly impresses me. After Andy and David had got on to the subject of breasts, there didn't seem to be time for an nice academic chat about ergonomics.

As well as her licence from the local authority (which every tattooist must have), Lisa has a certificate from an American company which asserts that "this studio is equipped with the world's finest tattooing equipment." Such things are subjective, of course, but Lisa's equipment certainly looks good enough to pass muster with the most demanding wardrobe officer.

She grew up in London and was apprenticed as a tattooist after leaving school, working in studios with other people before moving to the Island with her husband three years ago.

"I think tattooing is something I was always meant to do. Tattoos are a part of you — nobody can take them away. They are permanent artwork and I get job satisfaction by making a really good job of it."

Although she had no formal art training, she has an eye for design and many of the tattoos she has done for clients have been originals. "People have tattoos for all sorts of reasons. I always talk to them beforehand about what is involved and we work out what kind of design they



Study in concentration. Lisa Forde said: "'I think tattooing is something I was always meant to do. Tattoos are a part of you — nobody can take them away.'" 0605-c19496.

might like. I don't have people doing it on impulse and I don't think I've ever had anyone who regretted it later."

Lisa has been a champion of tattooed women (she once featured in a book illustration that was a female representation of a famous poster of male tattooists performing their art) and says body art is no longer just for men. "Women have been held back before, but not now."

So have no fears about your Trafalgar souvenir, ladies. While your bloke is down at Andy's having Popeye emblazoned on his backside, you can relax on Lisa's couch as she executes a dinky little burgee on your shoulder.

Tattooing is not, of course, the only option for remembering Trafalgar. Sailors have traditionally worn hooped rings in their ears and the fashion for body piercing offers a wealth of possibilities for the bicentenary.