

# NAPOLEON'S GRAND BRITISH HOLIDAY

The Remarkable Story of Bonaparte and His Time on the South Devon Coast

Mike Holgate

Napoleon Bonaparte's long reign of terror in Europe was finally brought to an end at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815. Attempting to flee to America, the fallen emperor surrendered when his ship was intercepted by the British navy. While the Prince Regent considered Napoleon's optimistic request to reside in England, the prisoner was held off the Devon coast on the warship HMS *Bellerophon*.

Before the decision was made to send 'Boney' into exile on St Helena, the celebrity became an instant tourist attraction as thousands of people flocked to the area and took boat trips hoping to catch a glimpse of the infamous 'Disturber of the World'. Newspapers were filled with lurid accounts of the great dictator as he paced the deck of the massive British warship in full view of the boatloads of sightseers. Artists recorded the scene and poets wrote epic verse.

Prefaced with a summary of the key campaigns during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, author Mike Holgate takes up the story during the aftermath of the Duke of Wellington's momentous victory at Waterloo, recounting public reaction, newsworthy incidents, eye witness accounts and anecdotes recorded during Napoleon's fateful two-week mid-summer sojourn in England.



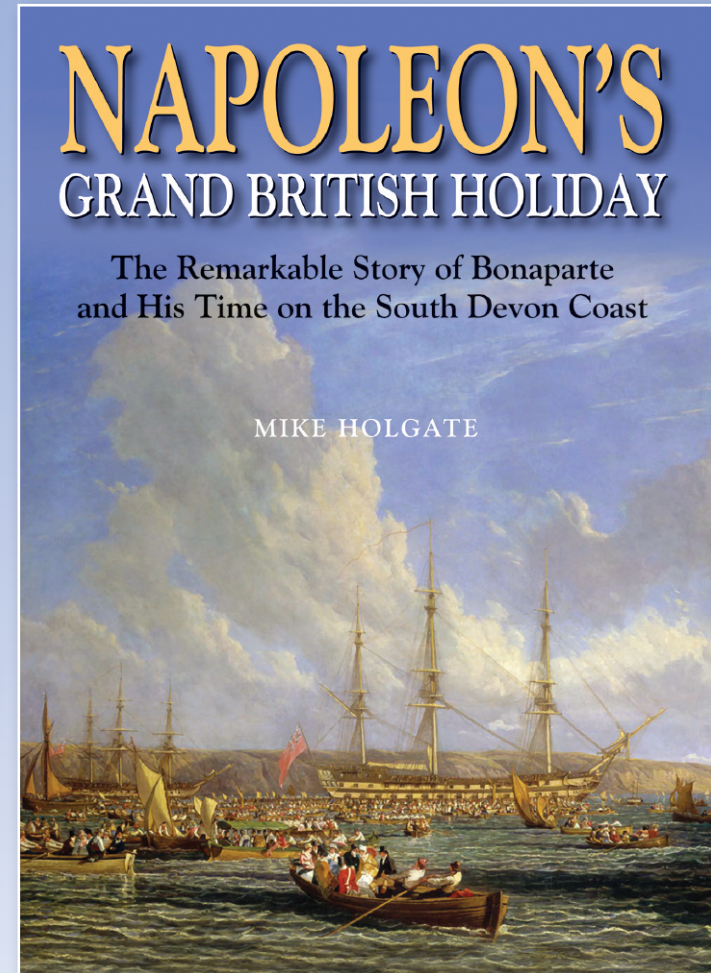
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Holgate lives in Torquay and has combined three careers as a writer, musician and librarian since obtaining an honours degree from Plymouth University in 1988. The author of several books, he has contributed articles to newspapers and magazines and has acted as an advisor and researcher for programmes produced by BBC Radio Devon and Granada Television.

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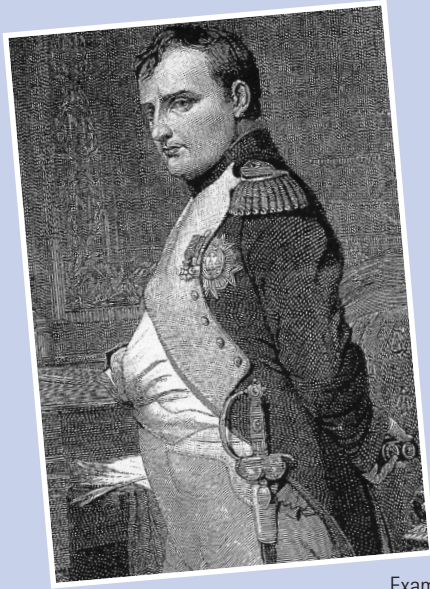
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Left: The officers and crew considered their passenger to be a 'Devilish good fellow'.



Right: Napoleon led his army to victory in forty battles.



Napoleon with his male companions on St Helena.

Example of a double-page spread.

The Battle of Waterloo.

## CHAPTER 2 Bonaparte's Blockade

*Boney went to Waterloo  
Way-aye-yah!  
There he got his overthrow  
Jean Francois!*

Napoleon Bonaparte fled from his homeland planning to seek refuge in America where his return to power had been greeted with joy in the press: 'Napoleon the Great is popular throughout America since his return from Elba and re-assumption of the throne, and he ought to be for the system of freedom he is now establishing'. In 1803, Napoleon had



Jack Tar settles with Boney



The Battle of New Orleans

funded his military ambitions by selling French territory in North America to the United States government raising \$15million from the Louisiana Purchase. Seen in Europe as an extension of the Napoleonic Wars, America had declared war on Britain in June 1812 for a number of reasons including: trade restrictions created by the war in Europe; the continual impressment of American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy; and unresolved issues relating to the American Revolutionary War (1775-83) which brought about the country's independence. The 1812 War severely stretched the military and financial resources of Britain, which was simultaneously involved in the war with France. Late in 1814, a peace treaty between Britain and America was signed but, due to communication problems, was not enacted in time to prevent the British suffering a major defeat at the Battle of New Orleans (ironically, a city established by French colonists), in January 1815. This was the latest in a string of morale-

