

## ST HELENA SNIPPETS

David Giles conducting checks with the MET Station team. Photo courtesy of MET Station



## St Helena Part of Global Monitoring Process

### AERONET Instrument at Bottom Woods Still Collecting Data for NASA

Hannah Durnford, SAMS

In September last year, NASA Scientist David Giles visited the island to launch an instrument under the Aerosol Robotic Network, AERONET programme, which was delivered to St Helena in May 2016.

The programme is an international network of automatic sun and sky scanning instruments, which measures the aerosol optical depth and collects related aerosol characteristics.

Six months on and the AERONET instrument at Bottom Woods is still collecting data. Data shows that the aerosol abundance was a maximum of 0.55 in August 2016.

In August and September last year, burning smoke from Africa moved across the South Atlantic Ocean towards St Helena and Ascension. Clouds often obscure the smoke particles from the surface observer; however the instrument can view the sun between the clouds to measure the aerosol depth.

There was an also significant gap in the data record from July to December 2016 which was mainly due to the weather conditions at Bottom Woods.

The data that was been collected so far is available to view on the NASA website. Met Station Manager Lori Bennett told The Sentinel, "We are pleased to be part of this network and are happy to be able to assist NASA in their data collection as part of the global monitoring process."

# Napoleon in America

## Writer Recreates French Emperors Life after St Helena

Hannah Durnford, SAMS

Historical fiction writer Shannon Selin has published a fictitious book titled *Napoleon in America*, which is about the French Emperor leaving St Helena to start a new life in America. The Sentinel spoke to Shannon about the book, the challenges she faced writing the book and also the response she has had from the public about the book.

**Q: What inspired you to write the book *Napoleon in America*?**

A number of years ago my husband and I dined at a restaurant called Napoleon House in New Orleans. The restaurant is in a 200-year-old building that used to belong to a Frenchman named Nicolas Girod. He was the mayor of New Orleans during the Battle of New Orleans. Girod hated the British and was very angry when they imprisoned Napoleon on St Helena. He fixed his house up as a residence for Napoleon and plotted with some local pirates to go and rescue Napoleon and bring him to the United States. Shortly before they were going to set sail, they learned that Napoleon had died.

I said to my husband, "That would make a great book, if Napoleon had gone to North America." He said, "Why don't you write it?" I thought, "Why not?" I had been writing fiction for my own amusement ever since I was a child, so the idea of writing a novel was not new to me.

**Q: Can you describe the book *Napoleon in***

**America, different to the synopsis?**

*Napoleon in America* begins where the Napoleon House legend leaves off – with his escape from St Helena and voyage to New Orleans.

The story is shaped by conflicts within Napoleon, as he tries to adjust to life in the United States, struggles with his health, and worries about his 10-year-old son, who is a captive of the Austrian royal family. There are scenes in Washington, where President James Monroe and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams are intent on staying out of European politics. Napoleon landing on their soil is their worst nightmare. Will he settle down as a country gentleman? Will he return to Europe to reclaim his throne? Or will he try to establish a new kingdom in the Americas? Napoleon says he wants to be a simple citizen, but the lure of adventure becomes too strong to resist.

**Q: How long did it take write the book from start to finish?**

Approximately three years.

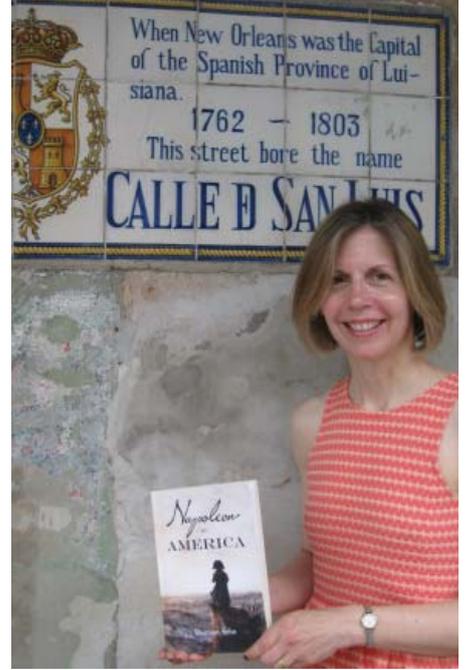
**Q: What challenges did you face along the way, and how did you overcome them?**

One of the challenges facing anyone writing historical fiction about Napoleon is the sheer volume of material about him. It was hard not to get bogged down in the research. At some point I had to decide enough was enough and just sit down and write. Then there was the challenge of figuring out the plot.

**Q: When was the book published? Have you had much feedback on the book so far?**

*Napoleon in America* was published in 2014. I am grateful for the many lovely reviews it has received. Kirkus Reviews called it "vigorous, engrossing and remarkably realistic. A thorough, sweeping novel with seamless transitions from the real to the imagined." I have

Shannon Selin in New Orleans



also heard privately from a number of readers who were kind enough to write and tell me how much they enjoyed the book.

**Q: How can the public get their hands on the book?**

*Napoleon in America* can be ordered from Amazon or your favourite bookstore. The e-version can be downloaded from digital stores like iTunes

**Q: Anything else you would like to add?**

I am working on the sequel to *Napoleon in America*, called *Napoleon in Texas*, which should come out later this year. I also blog about Napoleonic and 19th century history at shannonselin.com

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the book. I very much hope to visit St. Helena someday, and see for myself where Napoleon's American adventure began!