



Goldeneye: Where Bond was Born: Ian Fleming's Jamaica

by Matthew Parker
(Windmill, £9.99)

Ian Fleming first visited Jamaica in his role as assistant to the director of naval intelligence in 1943. He fell in love with it and decided to live on the island where he would “swim in the sea and write books”. Ten years later it would become the birthplace of the patriotic hero who put Britain back on the map at a time when the imperial power’s influence was waning. Commander Fleming bought 14 acres on the north coast of the island for £2,000 in 1946 and designed an austere house that a friend described as “a masterpiece of striking ugliness”. Fleming named it Goldeneye after a wartime operation, and spent at least two months a year there until his death in 1964. Built on a cliff, the house had a private beach and Fleming spent much of his time on the reef, hunting lobsters. Jamaica was, as Bond says, “the oldest and most romantic of former British possessions” - the perfect setting for Fleming’s thrillers: all were written there and three set there. Parker wonderfully captures the end-of-empire atmosphere that inspired the cold war’s most famous fictional hero. **PD Smith**