

GORDON BLOOR

Novelist and author of *Go Swift and Far*, a novel set in Bath.

Writing under the pseudonym Douglas Westcott, Bloor made the career shift from business to books, debuting his recent novel, *Go Swift and Far*, the first in a projected trilogy of novels tracing the development of Bath, from the time of WWII to the present. "I chose to write under a pen name as my advisors knew I had substantial business interests and they didn't think the book would do well at all," he laughs. "My friend, Alistair, had bet me £10 I wouldn't sell more than 800 copies. I chose the name Westcott as it's the village I grew up in, just outside Dorking. I'd been wanting to write for over 30 years and it's really my mother's story." The son of a Polish immigrant who fled to England after WWI, Bloor was orphaned at 17 and has lived in Bath for over three decades. "My grandfather was hung by Russians right before my mother's eyes when she was eight and she fled to England in 1922 and was supposed to get on a boat from Liverpool to America but she developed TB, so she never got on board. My father was killed in Burma. So, you could say I brought myself up. I was also always the chap in the dorm, sitting by the fireplace and telling stories. I had bought a property in Bath some 40 years ago and thought it a wonderful place. It has everything – from Georgian architecture to Austen, all preserved in aspic, you could say."



MY BEST OF BATH

- ◆ A walk from the Royal Crescent, through the Circus, and down to the bottom of the town in the sunlight. The City is a village of stunning architecture steeped in history and I inevitably meet one or more people I know and we start chatting.
- ◆ My wife, Liz, and I

- having dinner with friends at one of my favourite restaurants: Firehouse Rotisserie, The Porter or Raphael's.
- ◆ A film watched in the stillness – no phones or eating – and intimacy of The Little Theatre or watching a play at the historic Theatre Royal.
- ◆ Participating in one

- of the numerous annual events such as the Literary Festival, the Boules festival and Bath Christmas Market.
- ◆ A Saturday afternoon with my eldest son, starting with lunch at Joya's and then on to watch Bath Rugby win on the Recreation Ground.

Bloor's book is a great literary souvenir of Bath.