

Coates, Wells Wintemute 1895 - 1958



Wells Wintemute Coates [commonly known as Wells Coates] was born to Canadian parents in Tokyo, Japan on 17 December 1895. His mother, Sarah Agnes (Wintemute) Coates (1865-1945), was an architect and had been a pupil of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

He left Japan in 1913 and following a period travelling various parts of the world, studied at McGill University and the University of British Columbia (1913-16, 1919-21, B.A. and B.Sc. in Structural and Mechanical Engineering). He then moved to England to study at the University of London (1922-24, Ph.D in Engineering).

He worked as a journalist with the 'Daily Express' in London and Paris from 1923 to 1926. He also worked as an architect and engineer for Adams & Thompson and Chrysede Textile Company from 1924 to 1928.

In 1930 Coates established Wells Coates & Partners Ltd., which became Isokon Ltd. the following year. During the 1930s Coates designed furniture for Isokon and Pel, radios for Ecko, display stands for Vanesta, and exhibitions for the [MARS. Modern Architectural Research Group](#).

With [David Pleydell-Bouverie](#) (1911-1994) he also formed the architectural partnership [Wells Coates & Pleydell-Bouverie](#) in London in 1932. They designed a series of twenty Modernist Sunspan Houses and in 1934 designed the Second Feathers Club in Norland Gardens, London. The partnership had been dissolved by

1937 when Pleydell-Bouverie emigrated to the USA

Other architectural projects by Coates during the 1930s included the British Broadcasting Corporation Studios in London (1931) and Newcastle (1932), the Isokon Flats in Lawn Road, Hampstead (1933) and the Ekco Factory in Southend-on Sea (1936).

During the Second World War (1939-45) Coates served as a Technical Staff Officer (Wing Commander) with the RAF (VR). He resumed his work as an architect and designer following the War and was in partnership with Jacqueline Tyrwhitt in London from 1949 to 1952. In addition to various architectural projects, his activities during the 1940s and 1950s included the design of a number of radio and television cabinets such as the 'Princess' portable radio for E.K. Cole Ltd. (1947-48); the design of the Telekinema for the 1951 Festival of Britain in London; the architecture and planning of Iroquois New Town in Ontario (1952-54); and the design of the 'Wingsail' catamaran.

In 1955-56 he was Visiting Professor at Harvard University. He was in private practice from 1956 until his death two years later.

Coates was a member of Unit One (1933-35), and a founder member of the MARS Group in 1933. In 1939 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (FRIBA) and in 1944 was made a Royal Designer for Industry (RDI).

He died in Vancouver, British Columbia on 17 June 1958.

Worked in

Canada

UK

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Links

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<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/heritage/wells-coates>
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- Modern Mooch <https://modernmooch.com/tag/wells-coates/>
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