

## Management Trainee Programme – Robert Hemala

### Joining MAT Foundry Group

I graduated from Brno University of Technology and then worked for three years in the foundry industry, as a technologist responsible for moulding mixtures in Czech Republic. After this experience I knew this was not enough for me and I wanted to work in the foundry industry abroad, see the different type of casting production, new technologies and if possible, travel the world. The only company offering me this opportunity was MAT. My MAT journey started in August 2017 when I officially joined the Management Trainee Program.

The first facility I joined on the Management Trainee Program was Eurac Hradec in Czech Republic. My two-month placement took me over all departments in the foundry, to obtain an overall view and feeling what mass volume production is about. Each week I spent time with a different department, and I could gain experience what it takes to work on melting shop, produce cores, operate DISA line, quality procedures and lot more.

Two months in Eurac Hradec finished really quickly and I was packing my luggage for my first relocation to Eurac Poole in England. Eurac Poole organised my accommodation with an English family, which was a nice experience. Ernie and Carol provided me all the necessary things for comfortable living and introduced me to English cuisine and lifestyle. I spent three months in Poole.

I continued with my placement over the foundry departments, mostly production on DISA lines, melting shop and core shop. Both Eurac facilities produce break discs, so I could compare small differences in production and different approach for certain situations during the production. Time spent in Eurac Poole also helped me with my communication in the English language, because I personally didn't place a big emphasis on my language skills before I arrived. I finished my stay in Poole before Christmas and I travelled home to enjoy the holidays. The Trainee program is very flexible, so before my departure home, another relocation was arranged for me and I was looking forward to joining the team at MAT Foundries Europe Neunkirchen in Germany.



*Old Harry Rocks near Poole*



*Weekend trip to Plymouth*

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New Year and new start in MAT Foundries Europe, I was here for six months. Because my previous work experience was mainly sand mixtures and I wanted to extend my knowledge in this field of foundry industry; I was placed in the sand laboratory. I received my own project on green sand mixture that I took care of, evaluating the bentonite loss for each DISA line and certain castings for future refine dosing of additives into the mixer. Results were presented weekly and discussed with my leader and then implemented in production. I had a good time in Neunkirchen, especially with colleagues in laboratory. Sometimes language barrier with some people will get you in funny situations, like ordering the absolutely different lunch than you wanted but this is part of it. After six months in Germany I took two weeks of vacation to visit family and friends, before my next MAT adventure.



*Must do in Germany – local technoparty on the Bexbach airport next to Neunkirchen*

From Neunkirchen back to Eurac Poole. I returned to Eurac Poole to join the project of greensand mixture reclamation unit for further usage of sand for core production. I had an opportunity to visit company Omega, which provides these solutions for foundries. This technology was for me something I've previously only seen in textbooks, because it isn't widely used. I was really amazed to see it personally and be part of this project, which has big technological and economical potential for Eurac Poole. While working on this project I was informed about my possible relocation to Mincer HD in Mexico. When first cores from reclaimed sand were successfully produced for trial in production, my relocation to Mexico was confirmed. I was given flight tickets and I was ready to go to destination I wanted to visit the most.



*Sandbanks beach Poole*

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Ten hours and couple of beers later I landed in Mexico City. At the airport waiting for me was the first Management Trainee graduate Ondrej Chyla, who was already working in Mexico for two years. He took me to our rented flat and we become flatmates. Every day we travelled together into the work and in the first few months he was really helpful and showed me all around and everything works. In Mincer HD I was given the responsibility for all the sand mixtures used in their facility. Greensand mixture on DISA line and horizontal squeeze moulding, cold-box core production, hot-box core production and pepset technology became my daily responsibility, maintaining the right properties for casting production. For me the biggest challenge was pepset technology, because in Europe it's rarely used, but I got familiar with this technology in a short time. I got in touch with many suppliers of moulding materials for purpose of using material with right properties and economical benefit for Mincer HD. All this helped me in my professional growth. Mexico in general is very diverse country with rich cultural and natural heritage, so weekends and free time were just awesome. I visited many beautiful places and met a lot of interesting people.



*Mexico City arrival; New colleagues from MincerHD; Summit of Malinche*

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During the summer 2019 I was lucky to join Fair Trades GIFA in Düsseldorf and met a lot of MAT Foundry Group members in one place and see the newest trends in the foundry industry. Before GIFA we visited MAT Foundries Europe Üeckermünde, where I was offered the same role, I was currently in at Mincer HD but on a much larger scale. Taking care of greensand mixture on three DISA lines instead of one sounded good to me and because the Mincer sand mixtures had stabilized, I made the decision to relocate one more time.

Currently I am placed in MAT Foundries Europe Üeckermünde as a process engineer, working on the stabilization of greensand mixture parameters and scrap reduction. We are facing many challenges here but we have registered first small improvements on the way to our target.

Will see what the next months will bring me. Joining MAT fulfilled all my desires, which I had two years ago. I visited many different countries, foundries and met lot of new people which helped me in professional and personal growth. Thank you all.