

Firstly, thank you to you and the Worshipful Company of Founders for the opportunity to attend the 74th World Foundry Congress in Busan, South Korea. It was an amazing and unforgettable experience.

The location was a place I had never considered visiting. The people of South Korea were very hospitable and friendly and it is a very modern and technologically advanced country with new buildings, dominated by skyscrapers and tower blocks.

The congress itself took place over several days and included both technical and social events. It provided a fantastic opportunity to network and enabled me to speak with members of the casting industry, from both similar companies to Sylatech, and those not so similar.

I have been at Sylatech in Kirkbymoorside for 11 years. I studied product design at York St John University before starting in the Quality Department at the then Micro Metalsmiths. After 2 years in the role I became Quality Engineer and this is where I really started to enjoy casting. 6 years ago I became the Foundry Production Manager and now oversee all activity for castings made on site. The company makes parts for the aerospace, defence, medical and commercial sectors using the investment (lost wax) casting process.

I was most impressed with how welcoming everyone at the Congress was (and a personal thank you to Pam Murrell from the Cast Metals Federation and the Company) and Andrew Turner (from the Institute of Cast Metals Engineers) for all the help and hospitality whilst being out there). All members of the WFO spoke to me, from foundry operators to the President of the WFO.

The technical talks were very interesting and almost always had something relevant to the non-ferrous industry. A lot centred around the use of iron in aluminium. It allowed provoking thought and even inspired me to get up and ask a few questions. Whilst in Busan I was also able to take some time to visit a local foundry to see a like-minded business. This was an excellent chance to compare methods from my background in investment casting to the sand and gravity die casting used in Ulsan. The company are called ACK and specialise in cylinder heads and blocks for engines. They are looking to enter the aerospace market and requested a visit to share knowledge.

Attending this global event has certainly encouraged me to think more about the future of casting, particularly regarding the environmental factors and the struggles faced today concerning energy usage. It has also inspired me to visit more foundries to ensure that information is shared within the industry.

Following the Congress, I was also able to add in a short holiday to Japan, so the trip will be particularly memorable.

Although this was my first World Foundry Congress, I am hoping to go out to China in 2024 as a representative of Sylatech and can certainly see the benefit of such opportunities to those in the UK industry

I have invited Pam, Andrew and Josh (Ferrous Award winner) to visit Sylatech whenever is convenient, and would like to extend this invitation to yourself and anyone from the Company.

Many thanks, once again, for the generous award from the Worshipful Company of Founders.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Spooner

Foundry Production Manager, Sylatech Ltd.

*Winner – Founders' Industry Contribution Award (Non-Ferrous) 2021-22*