Simon Hutton is a remarkable young man. As Scott MacCallum found out, he has two full-time jobs and puts more than his fair share of overtime into both of them.

Simon says

Simon Hutton is a remarkable young man. As Scott MacCallum found out, he has two full-time jobs and puts more than his fair share of overtime into both of them. He is described by others as "come lately" to greenkeeping, having already chalked up almost 14 years of experience, and has a network of contacts to draw on from all aspects of the industry to enable him to carry out the tasks he is unable to undertake himself.

Oh yes. Simon has just turned 22. It is a remarkable story of a single-minded determination to succeed in a profession for which he has had a passion since an early age, and of a family who have pulled together to create a superb little golf club which certainly lives up to the term "family concern.

"My father, Tim, was the professional at Sleaford Golf Club and it was always his dream to have his own golf course," explained Simon, as he grabbed a bite of breakfast, in the attractive Sudbrook Moor clubhouse.

"The land here came up for sale about 13 years ago and although it was a big decision for the family we decided to buy 17 acres. We put on six holes - three par-3s and three par-4s - laying them out and constructing them all ourselves," he explained.

"Then in 1990 we acquired another 20 acres and made it a really good nine hole course."

In the early days Simon worked on the course in his spare time after school.

"School was not a priority for me," he confessed.

"From the age of eight I used to hand cut the greens and cut the rough while my mother, Judith, who was a teacher at the time, used to cut the fairways in an old Massey Ferguson with trailed gangs when she got home from work," said Simon, who mused about how such a situation would go down with the Health and Safety Executive these days.

Judith retired from greenkeeping duties when they employed Ernie Tatchell, as a greenkeeper/mechanic. Other labour is brought in on a self-employed basis.

Simon Hutton is a workaholic. There can be no other way of describing a man who not only maintains Sudbrook Manor Golf Club, near Newark, in Lincolnshire, but has masterminded the growth of Simon Hutton Fine Turf Services which, since the launch of the company two years ago, has chalked up almost 14 years of experience, and has a network of contacts to draw on from all aspects of the industry to enable him to carry out the tasks he is unable to undertake himself. Oh yes. Simon has just turned 22.

"From the age of eight I used to hand cut the greens and cut the rough while my mother, Judith, who was a teacher at the time, used to cut the fairways in an old Massey Ferguson with trailed gangs when she got home from work," said Simon, who mused about how such a situation would go down with the Health and Safety Executive these days.
Simon says

Simon’s love of all things greenkeeping began as he grew up in the family home on Sleaford Golf Club itself. “I used to love knocking about with the greenkeepers and did so every spare minute I had,” recalled Simon, who remembers Jim Darnatt, Head Greenkeeper at Sleaford as well as John Scotney, who took over a year before the Hutton family began their great adventure.

“In my element when I bought this place because I could be hands on,” Simon worked full-time on the course when he left school at 16 and the next big leap for the course came in 97. “We bought another four acres and put two new holes to replace two not so good holes. It made it a proper course and we had 18 greens and nine tees which means that galleries play to a different green on the back nine.”

His greenkeeping skills have been accumulated through experience, reading books and magazines while he forged friendships with people who were able to pass on knowledge to him. “I'm a quick learner and although I've made mistakes they have tended to be minor and made on our own course, which tends to be fairly disease free. ”

“Since buying for Finnum three-times in 13 years we use a lot of mechanical rather than chemical maintenance. We go from sandy loam to heavy clay on the course but it’s amazing how it looks after itself. “We mow it, aerate it, top dress it. I did was work and never had time to think about getting a vertidrain. I said that it had crossed my mind as I knew only two people in the county at the time had one but it got me thinking more seriously about it.

“I chewed the matter over. I had an interest in machinery and known a lot of people in the trade and they would phone me to say they had a particular machine or access to a machine that we had quite a bit and in 98 I started to do a bit of contracting spraying, hollow tining and top dressing” he explained.

It was through this that his business was formed in the direction of the machine that was to be the making of Simon Hutton Fine Turf Services. “I was talking to Sheamus Cogan, of Belton Woods, and he asked me if I'd ever thought about starting my own. I said that he had crossed my mind as I knew only two people in the county at the time had one but it got me thinking more seriously about it.

“In an ideal world I would get another man on the course and another on the contracting business,” he explained, adding that he also acts as an agent for seed as well as top dressing.

“In an ideal world I would get another man on the course and another on the contracting business,” he explained, adding that he also acts as an agent for seed as well as top dressing.

Ever the entrepreneur Simon called the offices a few days after the interview to ask if we could include his telephone numbers in the article. Happy to oblige Simon. Tel/Fax: 01400 250796 Mobile: 0976 726000