



## Dr. Stephen Sutton A Researcher Journey

*For the past 30 years, Sabah has been home to renowned entomologist, Dr Stephen Sutton. The UK born entomologist specializes in auditing the biodiversity of tropical forest insects. He is also one of the pioneers of upper canopy research in rain forests.*

In the 1970s till 1980s, Dr Sutton helped organised several of UK's major expeditions to the tropics, including Raleigh International. For 25years, he lectured on ecology at the University of Leeds and then became research coordinator for the Southeast Asia Rainforest Research Programme (SEARRP) based at Danum Valley, a highly successful joint venture between the Royal Society of London and Yayasan Sabah. He has authored and edited 8 books and published 75 papers. He collaborated with Sir David Attenborough on several TV programmes and for 15 years was a regular radio broadcaster in the UK on the topics of natural history.

Nowadays, Dr Sutton is retired but is currently working with the Institute of Terrestrial Biology and Conservation of University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on the Pyraloid Moth project, building up a SE Asia Reference Collection of these moths in Borneensis, the Institute's museum. Some 1500 specimens of 500 species have been added to the collection so far (but there are an estimated 2,500 species in Borneo!). Dr.Sutton has been working on this project since 2009 with funding from private sponsors in KL. An IT firm in KL has produced a website for

identifying these moths and Dato' Henry Barlow, Dr. Terry Whitaker and Dr Stephen have produced a 93 paged book with almost 1,0000 species depicted in its 25 coloured plates, providing identification for readers.

On June 5th 2015 a violent earthquake centred on Mount Kinabalu left a degree of psychological trauma in the tight-knit community of Kampung Kiau. Dr. Sutton was caught up in the earthquake while on the pyralioid moth audit for UMS at Kinabalu Mountain Lodge up at 1600m level. There were no injuries and little damage at that level, but, having

witnessed the physical and economic impact of the earthquake, Dr. Sutton decided to help the Kg Kiau community get back on its feet, looking for ways to provide extra income and thus raising folks spirit and confidence in the future.

The first project involved training mountain guides to develop communication and bird watching skills. The aim of the project also included increasing awareness among visitors of the rich biodiversity Mount Kinabalu has to offer. This work was funded courtesy of the Sunway Group and Bodhi Vision in KL and carried out by the Rotary Club of Kota Kinabalu (RCKK).



Stephen with his volunteers colleague