

# Pretty Simply Normal

About whatever, wherever, whenever ... Sunrise, sunset ... Truly appreciating each sunrise ... Just writing into the sunset ...

Monday, 28 January 2013

## Nostalgia: Alor Star Station & Railway Quarters



The Alor Star railway station on the morning of 28 Jan 2013 (CNB 2013)

Beginning tomorrow, the Alor Star\* Railway Station will operate from a temporary (and later new) site. But we hope the beautiful old station building will be preserved and not demolished altogether. Its proximity to Alor Star's CBD makes the site very attractive and we know that history and heritage often times have to make way for 'development'. Hopefully its not the case with this colonial style building constructed between 1912-1915.



The AS station clock tower (CNB 2013)

This railway station building is particularly dear to me because it was my childhood playground in the 50s. My father Ba worked with Keretapi Tanah Melayu (now KTMB) and I was born at 20 Railway Quarters, just a stone's throw across from this station. I remember that sometimes my older siblings and I would have *roti bakar* with *kaya* and hot Ovaltine drinks at the canteen here with Ba and his friend Uncle Kam Kee and his children.

I made the split second decision of going back to Alor Star by train when I saw a news flash about the Alor Star railway station operating from a new site on the 29th January 2013. It was my last chance of arriving 'home' by train. Just like my father used to do before.

Its a long ten hour train journey from KL Sentral, but the night train 'Senandung Langkawi' enabled us to sleep our way to Alor Star! Buying train tickets just a day before

### About Me

#### Simply Norma

Simply Norma was born once upon a time in Alor Star, Kedah. She recalls an interesting childhood in AS and Gemas, Negri Sembilan. Secondary education was at a boarding school in Seremban, her tertiary in KL. She then ventured overseas before returning to Pulau Pinang to settle into a library career spanning nearly 3 decades. Now she just lives simply, happily doing this and that, and leading a pretty normal life in Shah Alam, Selangor.

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the journey meant that there were only berths on the upper bunk available. But lucky for me, on the train, a very nice UM student, offered me her berth on the lower bunk. Thanks to June of Sungai Petani, I had a good sleep before arriving 'home' (Alor Star) at 7.15 am on the 28th January.



B and I on arrival at Alor Star railway station

Seeing the old house that used to be home invokes many beautiful memories of a railway childhood in Alor Star. But time has ravaged the row of houses on Jalan Station (Station Road). They now look quite abandoned - so dilapidated and probably just awaiting the demolition squad. Jalan Station used to be quite a busy road but seems no longer so. I recall being knocked down by a bicycle while crossing this road to the station opposite, and the very apologetic young fellow perpetrator received an earful from Ba. The young fellow and I became friends, got married later and live happily ever after. No, I just made up this story about us being friends, etc. ... but, the being knocked down by his bicycle is true!



Railway Quarters, Jalan Station, Alor Star (CNB 2013)



Postbox with the address of my childhood home in the 50s (CNB 2013)

The row of rain trees along this road must be nearly a century old because I remember they were very big even then in the 50s. Unfortunately there are fewer trees now so some must have been cut down. There seems to be so many changes in the station area, and to me, its mostly not for the better. OK, okay, everything changes and I was also very young once upon a time in Alor Star!

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The century old rain trees along Jalan Station (CNB 2013)


We spent the rest of the day visiting some Alor Star landmarks before 'Fireflying' back from the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport in Kepala Batas to Subang and home (Shah Alam) the same evening.

P.S. I'm glad Osman Ali featured the Alor Star Railway Station in his very successful box-office Malay film *Ombak Rindu*. I know that some people refer to this station as "*Station Ombak Rindu*".

*\* I still prefer to use the old spelling of Alor Star because it is pronounced so. One does not actually say Alor Se-tar, but Alor Star! Or Aloq Staq in deep Kedah speak!*

Posted by Simply Norma at 23:46  
Labels: [Kedah](#), [Malaysia](#), [Memoir](#), [Railways & Trains](#)



1 comment:

 **Anna** 3 February 2021 at 17:56  
Hi Puan,

Such an interesting post, thank you for sharing this with us. I came across your blog while reading about the railway quarters. My grandfather was a train driver, Lourdes Selvanaden and my grandmother Josephine. I believe they were in no. 34. You may have even bumped into them!!! Thank you so much for sharing.

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


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