

## Richard Vasey goes off Greek fast food

With a crash of gears, Richard was brought back into reality. Lack of synchromesh he surmised. Agnes was perched on the lorry engine cover, valiantly trying to engage the driver with her high school French, but without much success.

Richard, with tummy rumbling, was wedged in the jump seat. He tried to remember the last meal they'd had. Was it the shared pasta at a bistro in Palaiokastritsa or the souvlaki at the Old Fortress in the main town? Agnes was right about the "free flowing" Retsina, but on an empty stomach? Mmm!

At that point the lorry driver shouted, "Ioannina", as if it was obvious where they were. A large lake filled the horizon and they were left at a fork in the road.

Richard was sitting exhausted on his ridiculously large backpack, when a gaggle of women walked by carrying trays. Each very proudly offered a sample, shouting in chorus, "Tsoureki". Richard fell into dream-like state as he ploughed through the wonderful flavours of orange, almond and butter.

Meanwhile, Agnes had flagged down a dilapidated Vee-Dub, with a colour scheme mostly dominated by rust. The moustachioed driver called out "Saloniki!" while pointing to the right fork in the road.

Richard clambered into the back seat, to be hidden by the back packs. Agnes joined the driver up front and again launched into her patter. "Where are you from?" and, "Where are you going?" The driver tried hard to engage; seemed very upbeat. Fast streams of dialogue followed with the emphasis on "Pascha" and "Christos Anesti".

After a while, the driver was getting frustrated and he started shouting, "Baa! Baa!" while pointing to the front of the vehicle. He pulled off the road into a clearing of sparse eucalyptus and motioned them out of the vehicle.

Agnes gave Richard the eye, but they reluctantly joined the driver at the front. With a flourish, he lifted the bonnet to reveal a small mass of quivering flesh and wool that was quietly bleating. The driver pointed to the animal. "Souvlaki! Ha ha ha!"

As the ancient car disappeared in a cloud of smoke and clatter, Richard said, "It wasn't the travel experience I thought it would be."