

Farmer Giles Cave

(a.k.a. Farmer Spiros Cave)

Location: In an olive grove, just East of Idea

Grid ref: N 38° 26' 20", E 22° 27' 0", Alt. 100 m

Depth: 8 m

Surveyors: Laurence Abbott, Vicky Dunn, Mark Middleton, and David Nightingale

After shopping (and scoffing) in Idea, we drove Eastwards out of Idea along the coast road. We had seen some large looking holes in the distant cliff faces when driving into Itea and wanted to check them out. The best area seemed to be just up from an olive grove so we turned onto a dirt track leading through the olive plantation. We are pretty sure that it wasn't a public road but there were no obvious 'keep out' signs or barriers!

After climbing up the hill side and examining a couple of holes we eventually parked below a large, decent looking hole in the hill side. The surrounding hills appeared to be made from some type of sandstone so we were not expecting a great depth. There was some litter just inside the entrance, indicating that the local lads probably went there from time to time for a few quiet tinnies!

The entrance was about four metres high leading to a large passage about eight metres long. The floor had a small channel in the centre, which was probably a dried-up stream bed. At the end of the passage, there was a T-junction. At this junction was a large boss below a shaft disappearing upwards. Mark climbed up but the shaft didn't seem to go anywhere.

The left-hand route from the T-junction was a steadily narrowing tube that climbed slowly upwards, ending after about twenty metres; the far reaches of this tube was infested with thousands of tiny flies. Part of the way along this passage was a small tube disappearing up from the left-hand wall. Vicky and I investigated but it went nowhere.

Just to the right of the T-junction was a large rock bridge, which one could go either underneath or climb up and over the top. Both routes ended at a second entrance to the cave, slightly higher than the main entrance.

As we were surveying the cave, we saw another car driving along the dirt track through the olive grove towards our car. We watched from the cave entrance, as the car stopped and the farmer jumped out. He looked at our car and then looked suspiciously round his olive grove. We shrank back into the cave, out of sight. The farmer went back to his car and started doing something in his boot. We were convinced that it was a shot gun but that was probably our imagination! At

this point we grabbed all of our stuff from near the entrance to the cave and put it further into the depths of the cave. Surveying then was completed quite quietly!

Luckily, when we had finished, Farmer Giles (Farmer Spiros could be the Greek equivalent!) had driven further down the track, so we could get back to the car in safety. We left the olive grove rapidly. The walk back to the car led us past the decomposing body of a dog. Maybe Farmer Giles was using it as a strange type of fertiliser for his olives! Whatever, it was truly festering and stank!

Not the biggest of caves but significantly more interesting than those we found on the way back, which involved climbing up stupidly steep, and stupidly high scree slopes. There was also a photo opportunity involving Dave, a tortoise, and a caving helmet!

Farmer Giles Cave, East of Itea, Greece

