

Audioscript

I

Announcer: Speaker 1

People won't stop driving because the "improvements" to the public transport network aren't adequate. Before planning a scheme like this, they need to make public transport much cheaper and more efficient. The scheme may be successful in reducing congestion but air quality won't improve because people will either find alternative routes or drive to places where they won't be charged for using their cars, and in many cases people will have no choice - they'll just have to pay the charge. It's just another way to take money off of us!

Announcer: Speaker 2

We can't go on as we are and our roads just get more and more congested each year. A journey to my local supermarket, which used to take 5 minutes now always, takes me at least 15 minutes because of the traffic. While I appreciate it's going to make life more difficult for some people, something has to be done to reduce congestion and pollution. Most people won't be affected too badly so why is everyone against the idea of congestion charging?

Announcer: Speaker 3

It will affect us in lots of ways, none of them positive. Firstly, our costs will go up as our suppliers will charge us more for bringing goods into the city centre. Secondly, it will cost our employees more to get to work; for some of them who work at night, public transport isn't an option, so it may be harder for us to recruit staff. And thirdly, it will affect our customers because it will be more expensive and less convenient for them to get to us, which means they may go elsewhere.

Announcer: Speaker 4

The congestion charge will literally be a breath of fresh air to local residents. Not just because there'll be less traffic in the area and so less noise and pollution, but because we will all get a 90% discount on paying the congestion charge! Anyway, it really isn't necessary to have a car if you live here. We're so close to the centre of the city that it's not as though it's far to get the tube or bus to get to work or to go shopping.

Announcer: Speaker 5

I think it's the only way to persuade people not to use their cars. Surely the aim of discouraging people from driving into the city centre is a good thing? I'm sure once people realise there's less traffic on the road, they'll be more inclined to start cycling. It'll be much safer without all those big lorries thundering past. People may even get into the habit of walking again which will be much better for their health as well as for the environment.

II

Debbie: Cave diving, officially the world's most dangerous sport, isn't for everyone. If you're the kind of person who enjoys being underwater in dark, enclosed spaces then it's probably the ultimate adventure sport. But for the rest of us it sounds like our worst nightmare Barry Helman, who's just written 'A cave divers guide to diving', is here to explain what attracts people to the sport. Welcome to the show, Barry So, why do people go cave diving?

Barry: Thanks Debbie. Well, I guess there are a number of reasons. For me it's the amazing beauty of these caves, not to mention their incredible size. It's like nowhere else. You're looking at rock formations that are millions of years old and the water is crystal clear. Another thing I like is that I'm seeing things that no one has ever seen before. I'm like an explorer discovering new places. Of course,

if you don't know what you're doing it can be very dangerous but that's what some divers say they love about it. They enjoy the challenge.

Debbie: Don't you ever get scared?

Barry: Well, as I said, if you know what you're doing then you shouldn't have a problem. I think the worst thing that can happen is if your lights go out for some reason; it can be pretty disorienting being in total darkness. So that's why it's important to take two sets of lights with you. The other thing is that you can't immediately escape to the surface if you get into difficulties, which means your survival depends on your problem-solving abilities. Having said all that, cave diving isn't dangerous if you follow a few simple rules. Most of the accidents you read about could have been avoided if these people had followed simple steps to minimise the risks involved. It's also very important to know when to 'call a dive' or go back. And this is the first important lesson to learn. Another big danger is getting lost. Imagine entering an underwater room and looking back to see there is not one, but dozens of passages, and not knowing which way leads back to the entrance. So it's obviously only a sport for experienced divers, and you should never attempt cave diving without adequate training.

Debbie: It sounds like it takes a special sort of person to become a good cave diver

Barry: I think that's right. You must be the kind of person who doesn't panic if something goes wrong, and that takes a great deal of self-control. However, you can learn a lot about yourself from diving and I think knowing you can survive in such a demanding environment gives you greater confidence, both at work and socially.

Debbie: Thanks very much Barry. Well, as you can see there are lots of good reasons for taking up cave diving. Barry's new book is out on the 21st of April and...