

How did a small but funny stunt by one person to raise money for a charity become a global craze that has celebrities, politicians, children, office workers, teachers, nurses, journalists and so many others pouring iced water over their heads? The Ice Bucket Challenge started in America to raise money and awareness of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known in the UK as Motor Neurone Disease, and so far has raised millions of pounds across the world for research into the condition.

So what has made this so successful? It is mainly down to the viral tagging of the challenge. The person about to get ice poured all over them then nominates three more people who then nominate three more and so on. With the challenge being filmed and uploaded on to the internet it is then spread by a simple click of a mouse. However having high profile people and celebrities participating has undoubtedly helped while providing added amusement to the challenge.

As funny as some of the videos have been, including the so called “Ice Bucket Challenge Fails”, there is a serious and significant side to it. MND is a disease that attacks the spinal cord and can lead to speech difficulties, muscle spasms and even paralysis. It affects an estimated 5,000 in the UK and here in Malling we have an excellent local MND Association branch.

I was nominated for the challenge by a colleague. My local pub landlord took great pleasure, along with a regular punter, in pouring the most enormous bucket of water over my head. For a nano second I couldn't breathe. Everyone laughed. That momentary speechlessness, breathlessness and body spasm from the iced water is supposed to mirror, albeit in only a slight way, what happens to you when you develop MND. The challenge was funny, the cause is serious. Please donate.