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## [The Man In The Stream](#)

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Gordon Longton was a farmer, he took his own life the other day, no one knows why. The evening before his body was discovered he said he was just going to check the farm. His uncomprehending wife found him at first light hanging under the arm of an irrigator; it was just the week before Christmas. She is under sedation with her family and friends around her.

His funeral was on the Wednesday, the day before Christmas Eve, it was very well attended and everyone agreed he had been a good man. Having shaken his hand and looked into his eyes just a month before at an agricultural show, I have to agree. There was nothing in that kindly face and strong grip to suggest the manner in which he would chose to leave this life.

A mutual friend I talked to about Gordon after her return to work in the new year said Gordon and His wife came to see her about sponsorship for her business and while he was quiet and hung back in the conversation it wasn't enough to cause her any concern. When they were finished they shook hands and said their goodbyes she was shocked and completely surprised by what happened. She said "You just don't know what people are thinking".

Some years ago I got an inkling of what goes on in a suicidal mind from someone who had attempted it and survived to tell his story, this is what he said.

"The sun was shining and it was a clear day, I found myself walking in a gorge on the bank of a fast flowing river when I heard shouts coming round the bend but from who I could not tell. The voice of a man, in terror and pain got louder, he was looking back on the years of his life one by one, all the good things he should have done and all the bad things he did. He screamed his heart out but there was no one to listen, no one to explain to, no one. Just the echo of his own madness from the walls of the canyon.

Shortly the head of the man rounded the bend at the same time as he came to the present day in his mind. The river had taken him but there was just a chance I could reach him so I shouted for him to turn and hold out his hand so I could pull him in. His hand reached out and for a brief instant our fingers touched and he was held against the flow, but then as he looked at me, with a solemn expression he let go.

I had been concentrating on trying with all my might to hold on but the current was too strong and it pulled him away disappearing around the next bend. It was only as his body slipped under the water forever I suddenly recognised the man.

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It was me

I woke up, but the truth and the nightmare was right there in front of me, it had followed me into the day."

Max Crean (c) 2010

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