



# Life and Adventures 1776-1801: Text Classics

*John Nicol*

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## **Life and Adventures 1776-1801: Text Classics** John Nicol

First published in 1822, this is the extraordinary story of John Nicol, a sailor who circled the globe twice, fought Napoleon's navy, was in Hawaii just after Cook's death, and went to Port Jackson on a Second Fleet vessel with its cargo of female convicts.

Superbly edited and introduced by Tim Flannery, this is a classic tale by a brilliant observer of the savagery and tenderness of life when the modern age was in its infancy.

**John Nicol** was born in Scotland in 1755, and first went to sea in 1776. He served in the American War of Independence, and later sailed to Greenland, the West Indies, the South Pacific, China and the colony of New South Wales. He lived with the convict Sarah Whitlam in Port Jackson in 1790 after their son was born on the voyage to Australia. Later he served in the French Revolutionary Wars in Egypt and the Mediterranean, until he settled in Scotland in 1801. He died in 1825.

**Tim Flannery** is a bestselling writer, scientist and explorer. He has published over a dozen books, most recently *Among the Islands: Adventures in the Pacific*. In 2011 he was appointed chief commissioner of the Australian Climate Commission.

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'The unaffected remembrances of an 18th-century mariner, eerie in their ability to make readers feel contiguous with the events...This is a remarkable memoir...Nicol had an eye and ear for the background music of the everyday, of language...an immediacy rings in the account, pulling you in...[a] lucky find for treasure hunters who discovered a gem worth far more than its weight in gold doubloons.' *Kirkus Reviews*

'A rare treat...fresh, unstudied and spectacularly observant, it ranks with many of the better known classics...The result is a charming account of the world seen through the eyes of a kindly and thoughtful man with a great capacity for empathy, a tremendous eye for detail and, apparently, a spectacular memory...The world he travelled was so terribly interesting, foreign and strange and yet in some ways familiar, poised on the brink of modernity, as we are now poised on the brink of something else...And the stroke of genius was to secure Tim Flannery, author of the best-selling book on Australia's ecological history, *The Future Eaters*, as the series editor. Rapidly becoming Australia's answer to Stephen Jay Gould, Flannery is a scientist who writes like a historian and has a historian's passion for these early texts...Flannery brings a contagious enthusiasm to everything he does.' *Sunday Age*

'This remarkable little book defies the normal course of historical writing and gives us a uniquely personal view of the world as seen from the focsle in the late 18th century...Tim Flannery is to be congratulated for having the eye to breathe life back into a person whose story engages readers today as much as when it was first written.' *Sydney Morning Herald*

'It's a knockout...Nicol is a sunny, charming, highly observant guide and a first-rate storyteller.' *Sun Herald*

'It is tales such as these that suddenly transport you back in time...For anyone with a passing interest in history, or those who just like a good story, you can't go past Nicol. It's going to be one of those books that

everyone reads once - and then buys five copies to give to friends.' *Herald Sun*

'Sometimes a voice comes out of nowhere and - like the wedding guest - you are stopped in your tracks by the tale of an ancient mariner...Terrific.' *The Times*

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