Willem Jansz

Who was he? A Dutch ship's captain.
Where did he explore? New Guinea's southern coast and the west coast of Cape York Peninsula.

In 1606 the Dutch sailors Willem Jansz and Jan Lodewycks were the first Europeans to record their sighting of the coast of the Australian continent. Jansz was born in 1570 in the Netherlands. In 1606 the VOC sent Jansz, along with Jan Lodewycks, from Batavia on the ship *Duynken*, which means 'Little Dove'. They sailed east to northern New Guinea to search for gold. Jansz discovered and charted the coast of southern New Guinea and sailed down the western coast of Cape York Peninsula. He thought he was still charting the coast of New Guinea and did not realise that he had crossed a strait and sailed into the waters around northern Australia. They sailed south for 320 kilometres along Cape York Peninsula. He wrote that the country was 'inhabited by savage, cruel, black barbarians who slew some of our sailors'.

Jansz drew the first charts of northern Australia's coast and islands including coral reefs, rivers and openings along the western coast of Cape York Peninsula. The *Duynken* was forced to return to Batavia when provisions and water could not be found on the Australian mainland. He did not prove that Australia was an island. Until the late 1700s VOC maps showed Australia and New Guinea joined as one landmass.