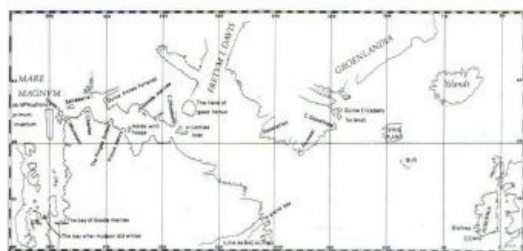


Navigating through the Unknown



I recently read the fascinating book '[The Island at the Center of the World](#)', Russell Shorto's masterpiece on the epic story of the Dutch colony centred on Manhattan that shaped New York, writes Wim van Wegen, content editor of '*Hydro International*', in a recent column. It is also the story of great explorers such as Henry Hudson and the likes of Peter Stuyvesant, who crossed the ocean and became the director-general of the colony and a key figure in the early history of New York City. It is hard to imagine that those brave men chose to raise their sails and set course for the New World, which was actually also setting course for the unknown. Don't forget that they did not have accurate marine charts, let alone electronic navigation charts (ENCs).

Hudson was probably more in need of a reliable map of the world or the globe, as he – after he had made two attempts to find the Northeast Passage to China – was determined to find a Northwest Passage to Asia. Employed by the Dutch, he passed Nova Scotia, Cape Cod and finally ended up at the river that was named after him: the Hudson River, and the island of Manhattan. [New Amsterdam](#) was established here; the Dutch settlement that later became New York City. This all happened at the beginning of the 17th Century. Now, four centuries on, there still is a lot to discover. For example, only 15% of the Earth's ocean has been mapped! And coming back to navigation charts: even today there is still room for improvement. A new development is high-density bathymetric ENCs that can foster both commercial interests and safety of navigation. Hudson's mind would have boggles by this, but pioneers like him definitely contributed to the search for better navigation tools. The way of the pioneer is always rough.



Map of the fourth voyage of Henry Hudson, 1610-1611.