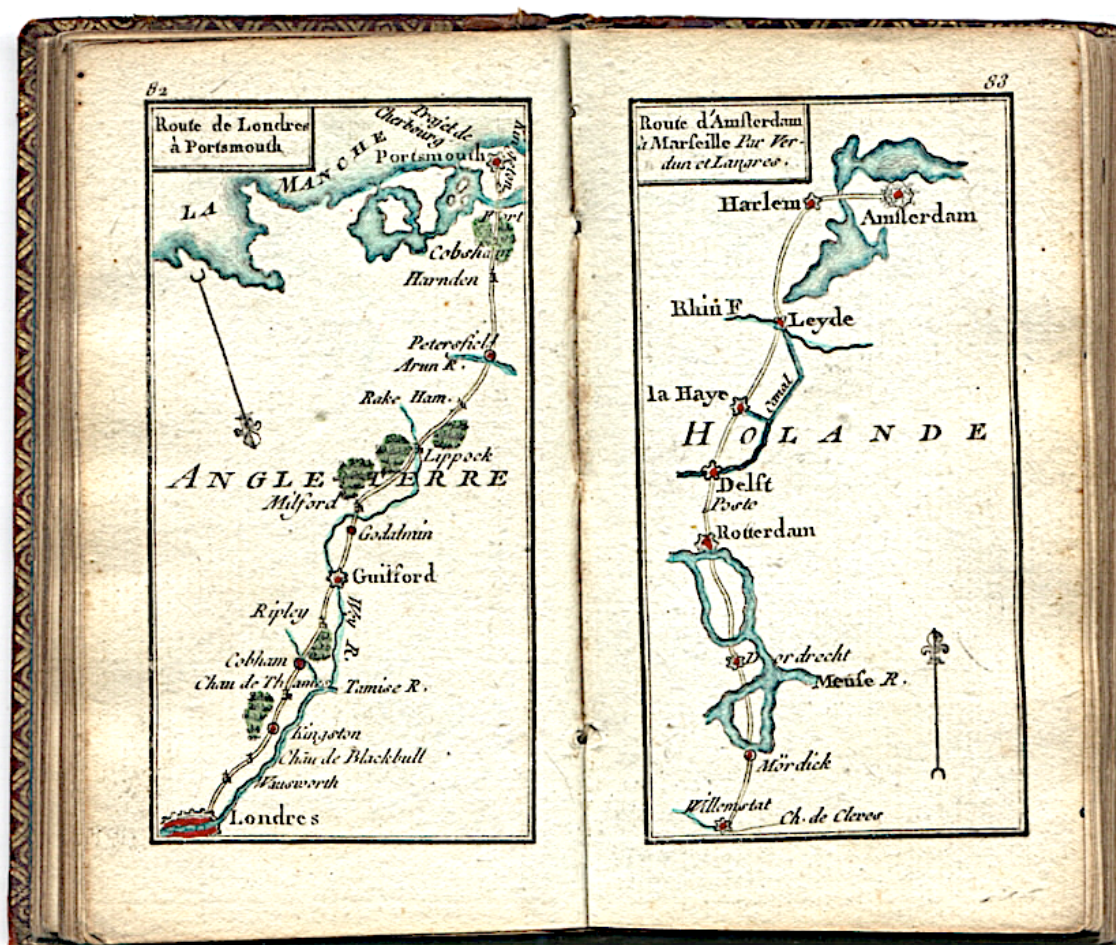


Although he was bankrupt in 1784 Louis-Charles Desnos was a prolific and successful publisher. One of his best-sellers was Claude Sidoine Michel's *L'Indicateur fidèle*, a road atlas of France. In 1771 Desnos issued a very much smaller version of it, which measures only 115 x 65 mm. and copies are often found with lovely hand-colour. This was the second of his three miniature atlases. The first was one of the world (see 1770a) and the last related to the administrative divisions of France known as *gouvernements* (see 1775a).



Desnos' little road atlas was undoubtedly inspired by the even smaller one issued a few years earlier by Louis Denis (see 1768). It is engraved throughout and the signature 'Gravées par Dézauche' appears at the foot of the title-page, so it seems quite likely that he was the engraver of all the plates. The first two maps are both double-page: *Carte Générale des Routes de France*, 103 x 93 mm. and *Environs de Paris*, 97 x 95mm. These are followed by 150 numbered single-page road maps, only 48 x 93 mm. in size and printed back to back. A nine page *Table des routes*, plus a key, completed the work.



Unlike the much larger versions to be found in England, this one has several excursions into nearby countries, going to Basle, Luxembourg, Brussels, Amsterdam, Augsburg, Nuremberg and Vienna. It even goes across the sea to England: pages 66/9 have Paris to London via Dover and pages 81/2 have Newhaven and Portsmouth to the capital.

A second edition, 'corrected and augmented', was also published in the same year, 1771, with six more road maps and an *Addition de la table* added at the rear. It seems to have been popular as it was subsequently reprinted many times, though with Dézauche's signature removed from the title-page. From 1777 a forty-seven page index was added. Thomas Jefferson carried a copy with him when visiting France in 1787. By the last issue of 1793 the plates were quite changed from their original state due to the many revisions. The title-page was finally altered too, with the words *Dédiées au Roi* replaced with *Dédié a la République Françoise*.



*Etrennes utiles et nécessaires aux commerçans et voyageurs ou Indicateur fidèle. (engraved half-title/frontispiece: Routes de France). Paris, Louis-Charles Desnos, 1771, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, 1775, 1777, 1780, 1785, 1793.*