

THE JAPOS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF JOURNALISTS, AUTHORS, AND
POETS ON STAMPS

The JAPOS BULLETIN is published quarterly. DUES are \$7. Remit dues to the JAPOS Secretary-Treasurer (address below) by December 31 to subscribe for the following calendar year. JAPOS is a study unit of the American Topical Association, an affiliate (#68) of the American Philatelic Society, and a chapter (#54) of the American First Day Cover Society.

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PRESIDENT	Clete Delvaux, 800 Unit B East River Dr., De Pere, WI 54115
VICE PRESIDENT	Mark Winnegrad, 1450 Parkchester Rd., Apt. 5A, Bronx, NY 10462
SEC-TREAS & PUBLISHER	Christopher Cook, 7222 Hollywood Rd., Berrien Springs, MI 49103 Email: cdcook2@gmail.com
EDITOR	Clete Delvaux (address above) cletus.delvaux@gmail.com

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PREPARING JAPOS FOR 2022

In this final issue of 2021, members will find an important half sheet prepared by Sec.-Treas. CHRIS COOK. On one side is your JAPOS DUES NOTICE for 2022. Although USPS has again raised first class postage, your JAPOS dues remain at \$7 for 2022! (Of course, donations are always appreciated.)

On the other side, is your ballot for electing officers to lead the affairs of JAPOS for 2022-2024.

SHOCKING NEWS MAY SPELL **THE END OF JAPOS?**

At the end of August, your JAPOS editor received the sad news that JEFF DUGDALE, the chief contributor of articles to the JAPOS BULLETIN and the keeper of back issues, has died!

In order for the Bulletin to survive, JAPOS members will need to step forward to contribute articles to fill its eight-page quarterly issues.

SUGGESTIONS: What about choosing a "Literary Arts" writer to write up? JAPOS Secretary Chris Cook recently sent me a complete list of the USPS' Literary Arts stamps so I can provide illustrations. What about writing up a page on the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature? In addition, a number of authors are celebrating anniversaries in 2022, for example, 50 years ago, Marianne Moore and Ezra Pound died; Jules Verne published *Around the World in 80 Days* 150 years ago; Charlotte Bronte published *Jane Eyre* and Emily Bronte published *Wuthering Heights* 175 years ago. Need more? Try me.

Sci-Fi Tales Part Two Jeff Dugdale 1.2021

Superheroes

The first superhero to appear on a GB stamp is the strong chinned and noble **Dan Dare**— “pilot of the future” who regularly appeared on the front pages of editions of the British *Eagle* sci-fi comic from 1950. On this 1994 Greetings issue which had the theme of messages Dan is seen communicating with his arch rival The Mekon, leader of The Treens, all of whom have green heads and soul-less eyes. The Mekon regularly attempted to conquer the earth and Dan stopped him every single time. Dan also appeared on one stamp of the set celebrating British comics in 2012.



The quintessential superhero **Superman** first appears on a stamp from the USA in 1998 as part of the Celebrate the Century: the 1930s souvenir sheet. Superman debuted as a DC comic super hero in 1938. His back story, told to us in plot lines by Jerry Siegel with illustrations by Joe Shuster, was that he was born “Kal-El” on the planet Krypton and blasted to Earth by his scientist father just as his home planet was about to disintegrate. Found by a Kansas farmer, the boy grows up as Clark Kent, and you know the rest...



Superman began to appear in movies in a cartoon series in 1941 and *The Adventures of Superman* began on TV in 1955. Beginning in 1952 the stories were acted out in monochrome with George Reeves in the title role and Phyllis Coates playing Lois Lane.

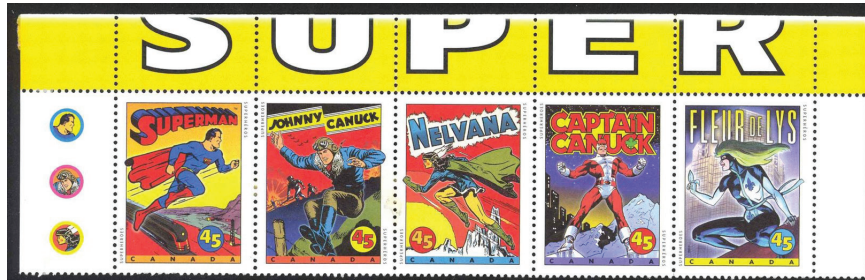
In 2006 USPS produced a complete sheet of DC comic superheroes, with each hero being portrayed on two stamps including Superman, Wonder Woman, Supergirl, Batman alongside some like Plastic Man and Hawkman who are fairly obscure today. The following year the rival Marvel comics were treated in the same way with superheroes like Spider-man, the Incredible Hulk, Captain America and the X-men featured, again alongside some less well known heroes like Sub-mariner and Elektra.

Marvel superheroes were celebrated with a fifteen (!) stamp issue by GB in 2019. This references some relatively unknown superheroes like Captain Britain, Peggy Carter and Union Jack. Of course many of these comic book heroes from the 1930s etc. have now appeared in major movie adaptations.



Superman appears in a set of six stamps and a holographic mini-sheet from Jersey in 2013. In this the Jersey-born actor Henry Cavill is shown in the title role. Finally Superman is one of five superheroes claimed as Canadian in an issue in 1995, which also contains Johnny Canuck, Captain Canuck and the superheroine Fleur de Lys.





Sci Fi in Other Media

So far this feature has looked at stamps issued to celebrate works which were originally published in book, magazine, comic or graphic novel form, but relatively recently there has been a plethora of stamps celebrating sci-fi stories made for TV or cinema.

The earliest of these from the Royal Mail was the Gerry Anderson sci-fi puppet series *Stingray* in the Children's TV celebration of 1996, followed by a longer set of other Anderson sci-fi creations in 2011. In the *Stingray* stamp the craft's commander Troy Tempest, modelled on US actor James Garner is pictured with arch-enemy Lord Titan of the Aquaphibians.



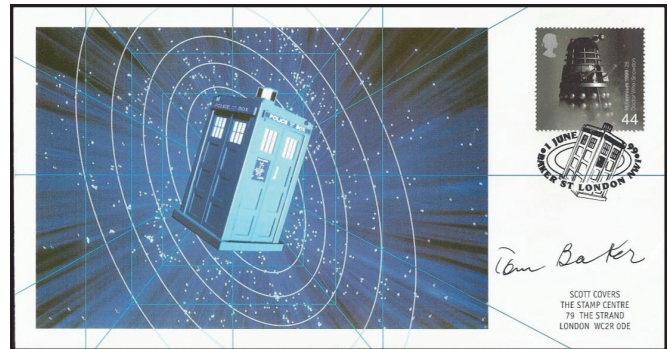
The later set celebrating Anderson's supermarionation creations allocates five stamps to *Thunderbirds*, which follows the adventures of International Rescue, led by former astronaut Jeff Tracy. He and his five sons use technically advanced equipment and machinery to defeat their enemies.

Another nemesis of the human race, The Daleks first appear on a GB stamp in 1999 (below) as part of the Millennium Entertainers' Tale set. A full range of actors who played the Time Lord **Dr Who** and some of his arch enemies appear in a long set plus miniature sheet in 2013.



The first incarnation of The Doctor appeared on our TV screens in 1963. The cyborg Daleks were created by Terry Nation and legend has it they were so named when his eye caught sight of the spine of an encyclopaedia which carried the content abbreviation DAL-LEK, but this is just a myth.

In addition to eleven stamps showing the head and shoulders of actors playing Doctors #1-#11, a miniature sheet contains images of the Tardis surrounding by a Dalek, an Ood, a Cyberman and a Weeping Angel, top of next column.



Cover signed by English actor Tom Baker shown in the stamp below left



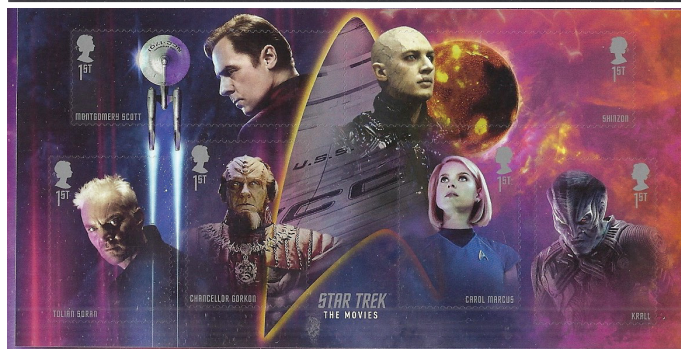
A number of movies with sci-fi themes and characters in them have been recognised with the issue of a single stamp by the USPS, for example *ET* in 2000's Celebrate the Century: 1980s, *Jurassic Park* in 2000's Celebrate the Century: 1990s and *Toy Story* in 2011 with an image of "superhero" Buzz Lightyear.

Sci-Fi Tales Part Three Jeff Dugdale 1.2021



Star Trek

The Starship *Enterprise* from the original *Star Trek* TV series first appears on a US stamp in 1999 within the Celebrate the Century: 1960s souvenir sheet (above). "Space—the final frontier" was a topic which appeared to kids of all ages from the first broadcast of Gene Roddenberry's sci-fi series in September 1966. With unforgettable characters like Captain James. T. Kirk, Mr Spock, the Vulcan first Officer, Medical Officer McCoy and others like Sulu and Uhuru on the bridge and presenting a variety of alien life forms— "It's life Captain, but not life as we know it" - this was a series which seemed to go on forever. A very large number of mainly philatelic issues have appeared over the years, for example from St Vincent in 1994, Guyana 1994, Micronesia 2000 and 2008, Chad 2013, Antigua 2015, Palau 2016, USA 2016, Canada 2016 and Grenada 2019. Most recently of course GB in 2020 produced a long set and mini-sheet totalling 18 stamps which covered characters and actors across all parts of the series from *The Motion Picture* in 1979 to *Star Trek Beyond* in 2016.



Canada 2016



USA and Canada 2016



Micronesia 2008 and St Vincent & Gr 1994

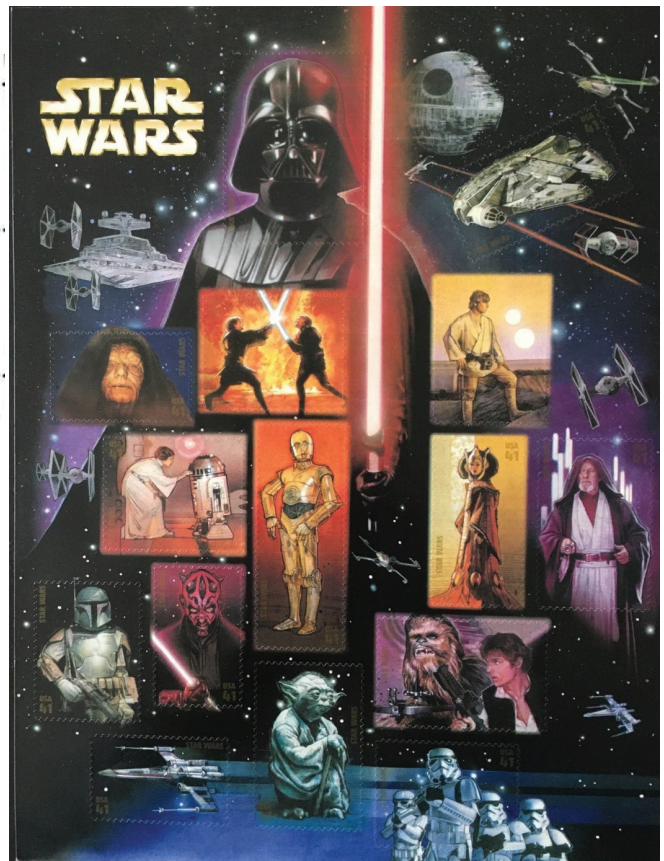


Congo 2013 and below St Vincent & Gr 1996



Star Wars

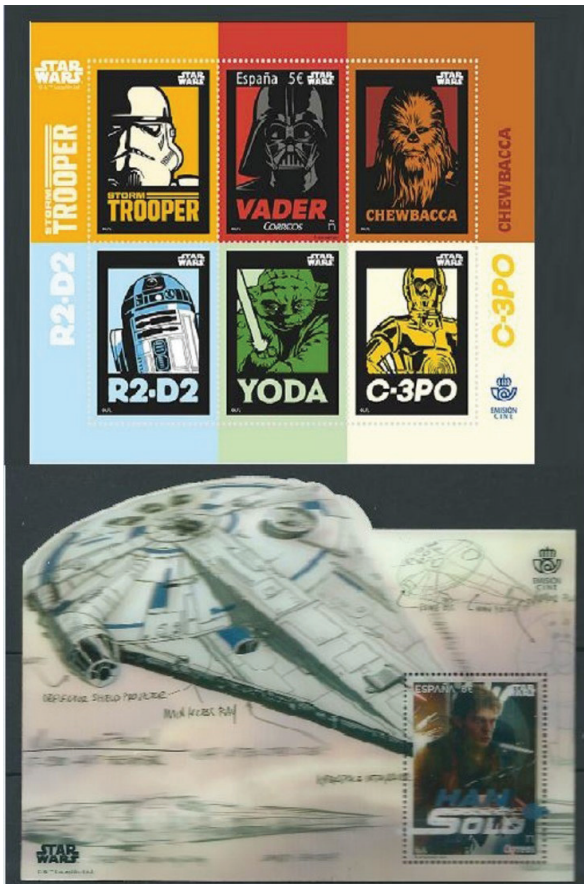
This franchise has been particularly well served by Royal Mail, much to the annoyance of purist GB collectors, who felt that the production of full sets in 2015, 2017 and 2019 was just too much, particularly for a topic which did not on the surface seem to be very British. This plethora of issues permitted a composite sheet to be produced showing all the character stamps across the three years, (*above right*) but ignoring the related souvenir sheets, which added a further twelve stamps, showing alien spacecraft. If you can find one of these stamps used in regular postage, treasure it! (Example from the 2015 adhesive sheet *shown*).



USA 2007.

The Yoda stamp was remodelled and issued on its own later in the year after a public vote on the most popular *Star Wars* character

The *Star Wars* epic franchise created by George Lucas began in 1977 with the first film, subsequently retitled *Episode IV: A New Hope*. A further eight films followed, including three prequels and three sequels, making up "The Skywalker Saga". These and their spin-offs have provided plenty of scope for commercially oriented and purely philatelic issues from several countries, for example Portugal and Spain in 2017, below and opposite.



And Finally,

But to finish where we began, there are yet more single stamps referencing sci-fi themes and authors and a good starting point in locating these is the long running USPS Literary Arts series, two recent examples from which are given.

The first story, published by **Edgar Rice Burroughs** (1875-1950) celebrated in 2013 for his Tarzan stories was *Under the Moons of Mars*, serialized in All-Story magazine in 1911. In 1917 A.C. McClurg published the story as a book entitled *A Princess of Mars*. By the time the serialization of *Under the Moons of Mars* was complete, Burroughs' first Tarzan story appeared in 1912, followed in 1914 by *Tarzan of the Apes*, which would become one of his most successful series.



US Sci-fi writer **Ursula le Guin** (1929-2018) is to be commemorated in the Literary Arts series with one of the first stamps of 2021.

She is best known for her works of speculative fiction, including science fiction works set in her Hainish universe, and the *Earthsea* fantasy series. She was first published in 1959, and her literary career spanned nearly sixty years, yielding more than twenty novels and over a hundred short stories, in addition to poetry, literary criticism, translations, and children's books.

Le Guin's writing was enormously influential in the field of speculative fiction, and has been the subject of intense critical attention. The background of the stamp shows a scene from her landmark 1969 novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, in which an envoy from Earth named Genly Ai escapes from a prison camp across the wintry planet of Gethen with Estraven, a disgraced Gethenian politician.



Over to you now to boldly go.....

The Legend of William (Wilhelm) Tell

Clete Delvaux

Everyone seems familiar with the legend of William Tell—at least the part where archer Tell shoots an apple off the head of his own son. But the legend symbolized much more than the apocryphal story. It symbolized the struggle for political and individual freedom for the rising nationalities of Europe—especially the Swiss movement for independence from the Austrian Hapsburgs in the 1300s.



Although there are earlier references to the Tell legend, it is Aegidius Tschudi's embroidered rendition written c. 1570 that became influential in early modern Switzerland and entered the public consciousness as the "William Tell" legend.



Here is a brief synopsis of the legend taken from Wikipedia:

Tell's canton (state or province) of Uri was governed by a tyrannical Austrian bailiff named Gessler, who had ordered all Swiss people to bow to a hat that he had set up on a pole in the main square of Altdorf. When Tell refused to bow, he was arrested. Having heard about Tell's marksmanship with a crossbow, Gessler promised to let Tell go free if he could shoot an apple off his (Tell's) own son's



head at 70 paces. Marksman Tell succeeded in hitting the apple, but he told Gessler that had he hurt his son, his second arrow would have killed Gessler. Gessler had Tell arrested and put in chains. While transporting Tell to a prison across a lake, a storm descended upon the boat. Gessler ordered Tell unchained to help save the boat and its passengers. Nearing the shore, Tell made his escape—but not before shooting an arrow through Gessler's heart.

The legend has it that this act led to a Swiss revolt, in which William Tell played a leading role. Britannica online adds, "There is no evidence, however, for the existence of Tell, but the story of the marksman's test is widely distributed in folklore. In the early Romantic era of nationalist revolutions, the Tell legend attained worldwide renown...."

The Swiss stamps shown above are from two sets, each set with the same design. On the left is William Tell with his crossbow (Sc #s 167-180), issued from 1914 to 1933; on the right is Tell's son Walter holding an apple with an arrow through it (Sc #s 146-163), issued from 1909 to 1917.



The Tell legend received a big boost in popularity in 1804, when Friedrich von Schiller produced his play *Wilhelm Tell*. Schiller himself had never been to Switzerland, but his wife Lotte, who knew the country from personal experience, urged him to write the play. Schiller's friend and fellow playwright, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, had returned from his second trip to the Lake of Lucerne in 1779, and he, too, urged him to research the legend and make it into a play.

(German Democratic Republic Sc # 2245 a&b is shown to the left)

Schiller, in order to turn a short legend into a five-act verse play, had to add various materials. For example, he added a “romance” element to a legend that makes no mention of the involvement of any women. In this thread of the play, Ulrich is in love with the tyrant Gessler’s ward Bertha. Thus, at first Ulrich supports Gessler’s atrocities. But Bertha “reveals that she will love Ulrich only if he joins in the fight to liberate his own people from Gessler’s grip,” which he eventually does.

Did Schiller fictionalize these added elements? Or did he research the historic background of the legend to add a historic basis to the legend? Wikipedia seems to favor the latter, since Schiller was “well informed, being a historian.” The Wikipedia article also lists the sources from which Schiller drew his information about the history of the Swiss Confederation.

“The love of liberty dramatized by the plot shows how Schiller agreed with and differed from the principles of the French Revolution,” which had occurred only a few years before Schiller wrote the play (Masterplots, 1957). *The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of World Literature* says “The play’s underlying theme is the justifiability of violence in political action.”

Schiller wrote the play between 1803 and 1804. It was published in 1804 in a first edition of 7,000 copies. Since its publication, *William Tell* has been translated into many languages. The first performance of Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell* was staged in Weimar under the direction of Johann Goethe on March 17, 1804. It has continued to be staged from then on. I was surprised to learn the play “has been performed every Labor Day weekend in New Glarus, Wisconsin [my home state], in English, and until recently also in German.” (New Glarus is a town west of Madison settled by Swiss immigrants.) In addition, *William Tell* has been made into films. And we must mention Italian Gioachino Rossini’s four-act opera, *Guillaume Tell*, (with its famous overture), which was written from a French adaptation of Schiller’s play.



In 1886, José Rizal, the Philippine poet and patriot (depicted on Sc # 813 at left), translated Schiller’s play into his native Tagalog, having drawn much of his literary and political inspiration from Schiller and his works. During the 19th century, *William Tell* inspired many freedom fighters; e.g., in Italy and the Russian Empire.

Although *Wilhelm Tell* was frequently staged during the Nazi regime in Germany, Hitler banned its public performance in 1941. And he had his reasons. He had narrowly escaped an assassination attempt by the young Swiss Maurice Bavaud (who was later dubbed the “New William Tell”).

It is amazing to me what an influence this legend has had on world literature and politics. I look forward to Walt Disney’s version? Or has he already been there, done that?