



## **Jane's H[elp] Files**

*For ... Not First, But Last*

This Help File is not the first but the last in the series of musings that have hopefully stirred the creative juices just enough to bring forth some interesting, visionary, quirky, dramatic and/or magnificent story ideas.

Today, we are taking yet another unusual diversion to think about not the firsts – remarkable as they are – but the lasts. The last time something occurred, was made, was seen, was whatever, can be as thought-provoking an event as anything which has claimed to be first. Personally, I'm currently considering a storyline where the athletes who all came fourth in their Olympic events save the world. It's an important story as everyone knows coming fourth sucks! As do vampires...

Here are some entries from Ian Harrison's *The Book of Lasts* (Launceston Reference Library 031.02 HAR) to get everyone thinking.

The last gladiatorial games were held in Rome 404 BC.

The last women fought in the Colosseum in 200 AD when gladiatrices were banned by Emperor Septimus Severus. Clearly, he didn't understand the male population...and who says women are late for everything.

The last western country to grant women the vote was Switzerland...in 1971! What's going on there?

In 1810 British coins ceased being minted in the Tower of London. The Royal Mint moved to nearby premises...I sense a heist coming on.

In 1889 the USA issues its last 3 cent coins...who makes 3 cent coins?

In 1670, Shakespeare's last direct descendant, a granddaughter, dies.

The last animals of the Royal Menagerie were moved from the Tower of London in 1834...busy place the old Tower.

Oliver Winchester (the repeating rifle fella) made a fortune, passed it to his son, William, in 1880, who dies in 1881, which passes the fortune to his daughter-in-law, Sarah. In 1884, Sarah begins to build a house that will be known as the Winchester Mystery House, in Santa Clara, California. Sarah dies in 1922, leaving a house with 160 rooms – that's the last fortune the Winchester family will probably see.

And lastly, something very dear to my heart, year in, year out, the Eurovision Song Contest – Null points, Britain, 2003, with 'Cry Baby' by Jemini...Eurovision rules!

Next in The H[elp] Files: *Some Technical Notes...*

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