

Golden Oldies

The ancient Greeks were clever, cruel and crackers. They believed in a mind-boggling bunch of grisly gods and monsters.

Gruesome Gods

Tetchy and terrible, paranoid and peculiar – this lot were never happy!

CRONOS...

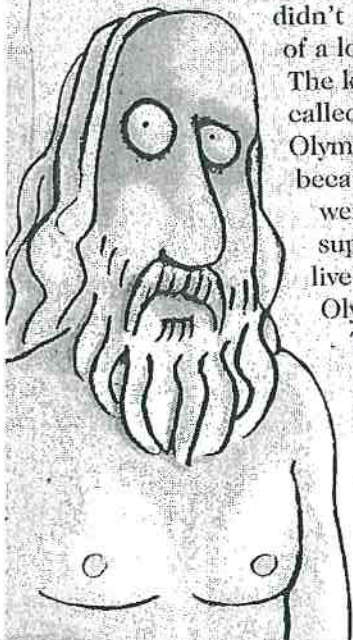
Cronos' reign in the heavens was the Golden Age of gods. It didn't last – Cronos and his old cronies were driven out by his own kids. But don't feel too sorry for Cronos. He had only become top god by killing his own father, Uranus. (He chopped off his naughty bits and scattered them in the oceans!)

and his kids

The new gang was run by Cronos' three sons: Zeus, Poseidon and Hades (their sisters

didn't get much of a look in). The kids were called the Olympian gods because they were supposed to live on Mount Olympus.

They were one big, unhappy family ...



'BRINGING UP' BABY

You'd have thought that being chief god would have made Cronos feel safe... but no. Somebody told him that one of his children would take his place. He figured that if none of his kids were alive, then they couldn't give him any bother. So Cronos ate his new born child. In one godly gobble.

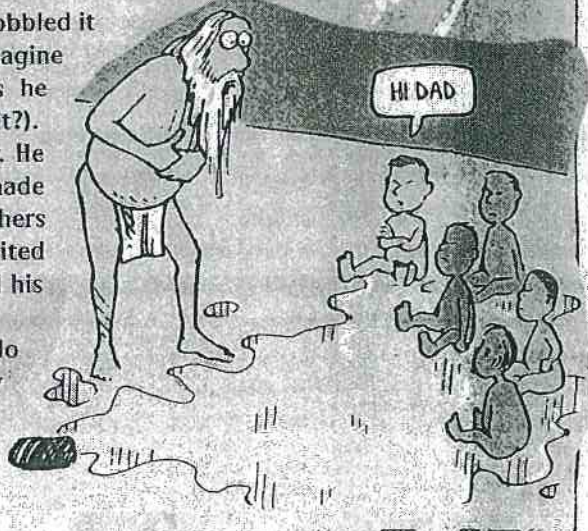
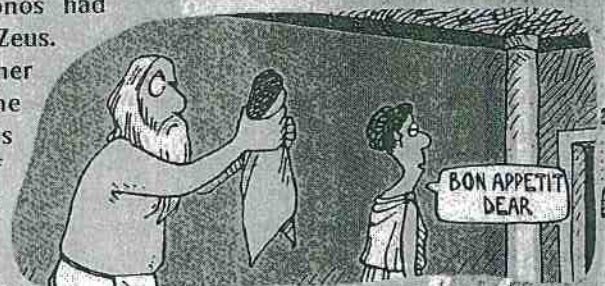
Mrs Cronos had four more babies... but each time they were born, Cronos scoffed them down.

One day, Mrs Cronos had another baby – little Zeus. Fed up with having her babies eaten, she decided to hide this one on the island of Crete and put a rock in his place instead.

Cronos came home, saw a new baby-sized bundle in the cot, and gobbled it just like all the rest. (Imagine the guts ache! Perhaps he felt a little bolder. Geddit?).

Zeus grew up grumpy. He returned home and made his dad sick up his brothers and sisters. Cronos vomited up the five babies... and his stony snack.

So did the children do for their dad? Well, how would you feel if your dad had eaten you alive?



The Greek Gods

Zeus



Hera

The top 10 gods



1 Hephaestus
god of fire and metalwork, an ugly blacksmith, lives in a volcano where he makes gods their armour and jewellery



3 Apollo
god of the Sun, young men, cattle, light, truth, healing. Lyre-player, athlete and archer



4 Artemis
goddess in charge of the Moon, hunting, bears and the harvest. Twin sister of Apollo and handy with her arrows too



2 Athena
goddess of arts, Greek cities, spinning, birds and sometimes of war – turned Arachne into a spider



5 Ares
god of war and unpopular with gods and with humans; he goes into battle with Deimos, the god of fear



6 Aphrodite
goddess of love and married to Hephaestus; she was to blame for the start of the Trojan War



7 Hestia
goddess of the home; she always turns up when there's a sacrifice at an altar and is prayed to before and after meals



9 Demeter
goddess of crops in summer when she's happy, but she causes winter when her daughter goes to Hades



8 Hermes
messenger to the gods with wings on his hat, wings and snakes on his wand; he leads dead humans to the Underworld



10 Poseidon
god of the sea, carries a trident and has a dolphin for company; stormy temper when people (like the Trojans) upset him