MAD, BAD AND DANGEROUS TO KNOW!

WHO'S ROME'S MADDEST MR. MAD??

AD68

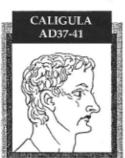
Emperors come and go. Sometimes we get lucky and sometimes we don't. Following the death of Augustus in AD14, we've had some of the most headbanging loonytunes this side of a SPITTING COBRA. But who is the maddest and, baddest? READ ON...

WHO WAS



soldier and pretty good at ruling

Strengthened frontiers of Empire, and saved up lots of



Never quite right, even as a child. Got a lot worse once he became Emperor.

mainly with the money Tiberius had saved.



Nephew of Tiberlus. Became Emperor at 50, having been Plucked from obscurity by Palace guard following assassination of Caligula Disabled, frail and nervous he was far brighter

than he looked.

Stepson of Claudius, Started off well, but power went to his head. Built a lot, including one of Rome's finest public baths, and a luxurious palace called the Golden House.

MAD?

HE?

Nope, but not unreasonable fear of assassination and unpleasant skin disease made him very edgy - not to mention rather unforgiving.

Built temple to himself, and appeared in it dressed as a

Married sister. When she died he declared weeks of public mourning, when no one was allowed to laugh. Fried to have his horse declared consul.

Assembled massive army to invade Britain, but forgot to provide ships for them to cross channel. Had them gather seashells instead.

Told his girlfriends while kissing them on the neck, "You'll lose this beautiful head whenever I decide."

The silver-tongued charmer! Alas, many of Caligula's activities are unsuitable for family newspaper.

Usual executions of rivals and plotters against him.

Had a courtler executed

for being too well-groomed. Insisted the victim's father come to the execution, and then invited him to dinner.

Assassinated by his own soldiers, and not a moment

Not remotely. Devoted his rule to improving the civil service, and involving the provinces more directly in government. He also added territory to the Empire. (Particularly Britain, and more of Greece.)

Not really. Main failing - a weakness for scheming wives, especially his fourth, Agrippina. (See below)

Only if you wanted to kill him. Despite being good at his job, he lacked support of Rome's ruling class. Various assassination attempts resulted in execution of 35 senators during his reign.

Agrippina polsoned his mushroom soup to make way for her son Nero.

AD54-68

Artistic temperament - he thought the Groeks were wonderful and imagined himself as a poet musician, charioteer, and actor, When he performed NO ONE was allowed to leave the theatre, not even women to

When he was really on form he had himself crowned five times a day.

Blamed Christians for a great fire in Rome (AD64) and persecuted them merclessiy. Some were even tarred, staked and torched to provide illum-nation in his private

Murdered mother, wife, brother, stepbrother, and forced tutor Seneca (the greatest philosopher of his age) to commit suicide. Also did away with scores more real and imagined rivals.

Committed suicide, shortly before his own soldiers came along to bump him off.

BAD?

DANGEROUS TO KNOW?

THEN WHAT?

Plots to depose him dealt with in starkly brutal fashion, and led to reign of terror in Rome, which cast long shadow over his final ars as Emperor.

Not so much bad as hard to deal with. Moved from Rome to the remote Isle of Capri,

where he felt safer and ruled

by post. Hit and miss nature of Roman postal service caused loss of patience in the capital, and prompted

assassination attempts.

He died of old age.