

service' and cosmetic surgery around the eyes. But the Ital-

He was reported to have had two further hair transplants in

rany he said. This morning in the hotel I fancied having sex

call on his mobile phone.

# Plasticine rolls back into fashion

By **Sean Poulter**  
Consumer Affairs Editor

IT'S news that will have Gromit barking in excitement.

Children inspired by the Wallace & Gromit films are leading a revival of Plasticine.

It had been enjoyed by generations of youngsters but nearly disappeared from the high street three years ago under the challenge from Play doh, a cheaper U.S. alternative.

However, sales across retailers have risen 50 per cent in only two years, according to retail analysts NPD.

Play doh is also more popular than ever with sales doubling over the last two years.

In a world of hi-tech toys and games consoles, Plasticine is seen as representing a return to innocence.

Many parents who enjoyed Plasticine in their youth are keen for youngsters to become involved in more creative play, rather than punching buttons.

The familiar smell - and taste - can immediately transport adults back to their own youth. It can be shaped into



virtually anything and has attracted the attention of children through its use in animated films.

Tesco assistant toy buyer Gary Mannion

said: 'Plasticine has well and truly rolled back into fashion. It has become very popular during the recession.'

'It's creative, reusable and reasonably priced. Another factor is that parents remember playing with Plasticine themselves.'

'We might think that children want all-singing all-dancing toys but they also want the freedom to make up their own games as well.'

'Plasticine and Play doh challenge kids to use their imagination.'

Plasticine, made of calcium salts, was invented in 1897 by an art teacher in Bath and first manufactured in Britain in 1900. Play doh, made of a floury substance, was invented in America in the 1950s.

Today, the combined value of sales is put at around £1million a year in the UK alone, according to NPD.

Last year, Top Gear presenter James May, together with around 2,000 members of the public, created a plasticine show garden for the 2009 Chelsea Flower Show.

Called Paradise in Plasticine, it took six weeks to create and contained 2.6tons of Plasticine in 24 colours.