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SPORTS
Life

A gnashing of teeth in Downing Street

MANDRAKE IS sorry to hear that Gordon Brown has become a martyr to bruxism, which is a condition that results in tooth grinding, gnashing and jaw clenching.

"Most people do it in their sleep, but you can see Gordon doing it during the day, too," whispers my man in Whitehall. "Up close, some of his teeth are already looking quite jagged. It's a classic sign of stress and frustration, and, in all the circumstances, I suppose it's hardly surprising that he's started doing it."

The Prime Minister's dentist is believed to be Mervyn Drurian, of the exclusive London Centre for Cosmetic Dentistry in Hampstead, north London, but he was the soul of discretion when Mandrake



called. If it is the case that Brown has become a grinder, then Drurian is likely to recommend an occlusal splint, which Brown would have to insert into his mouth at bedtime. The device tends to make the wearer look a bit like Hannibal Lecter, but it does protect the teeth from wear and reduce jaw muscle activity, and – good news for Sarah, perhaps – the noise of teeth grinding.

Brown is highly sensitive about his teeth. When I disclosed in 2006 that he had had extensive orthodontic work done, he issued a swift denial – even though old pictures of him, such as this one taken more than a decade ago, showed a smile that lacked a certain ring of confidence.