'AT HALF PAST THREE, EVERYTHING STOPS FOR TEA'

It is said to have been in the early nineteenth century that Anna, the 7th Duchess of Bedford had begun to complain of "having that sinking feeling" during the late afternoon. At the time it was usual for people to take only two main meals a day, breakfast, and a dinner at around 8 o'clock in the evening. The solution for the Duchess was a pot a tea and a light snack, taken privately in her boudoir during the afternoon.

Later friends were invited to join her in her rooms at Woburn Abbey and this summer practice proved so popular that the Duchess continued it when she returned to London, sending cards to her friends asking them to join her for "tea and a walking the fields."

Other social hostesses quickly picked up on the idea and the practice became respectable enough to move it into one's drawing room. Before long all of fashionable society was sipping tea and nibbling sandwiches in the middle of the afternoon.

Never trust a man who, when left alone in a room with a tea cosy, doesn't try it on

Billy Connolly

WHEELER'S AFTERNOON TEAS

Wheeler's Luxurious Afternoon Tea

Homemade scones, Cornish clotted cream and homemade strawberry Jam, partnered with homemade biscuits, dainty cakes and a selection of finger sandwiches. Completed with your choice of tea. £16.95

Wheeler's Cream Tea

Homemade scones, Cornish clotted cream and homemade strawberry jam. Completed with your choice of tea.

£ 9.95

Wheeler's Celebration Tea

Homemade scones, Cornish clotted cream, homemade strawberry jam grouped with homemade biscuits, dainty cakes and a selection of finger sandwiches, your choice of tea and accompanied by a glass of Perrier-Jouët NV Champagne. (add £5 for Rose)

SELECTION OF TEAS

English BreakfastMixed blend of tea leaves for a golden & well rounded flavourAssamStatuesque and broad, plenty of structure and malty richnessEarl GreyBright and refreshing, with citrus lifting the rich Ceylon base

Golden Darjeeling Gentle, graceful and full of subtle fragrant flavours

PeppermintInsistent and deep minty flavours. Finishes cleanly with a perfume end.CamomileMellow floral depths with gently and cleansing bitter complexities to finishDecaf TeaTop-quality teas that don't lose their flavour when they're decaffeinated

Cranberry Summer fruits bring a fresh and lively taste, Elderflower brings some sweetness.

Redbush Naturally caffeine free with a vibrant copper-red aroma.

* Cakes & Biscuits May Contains Nuts