



TO THE MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE MRS. SODANNA NOEL WHO WITH
HER SON BAPTIST 3RD EARL OF CAINSBOROUGH GAVE THIS
WELL TOGETHER WITH 4 ACRES OF LAND TO THE USE AND
BENEFIT OF THE POOR OF HAMPSTEAD 20TH DEC 1658.

GHALYBEATE WELL



This is the Chalybeate Well in Well Walk, Hampstead.



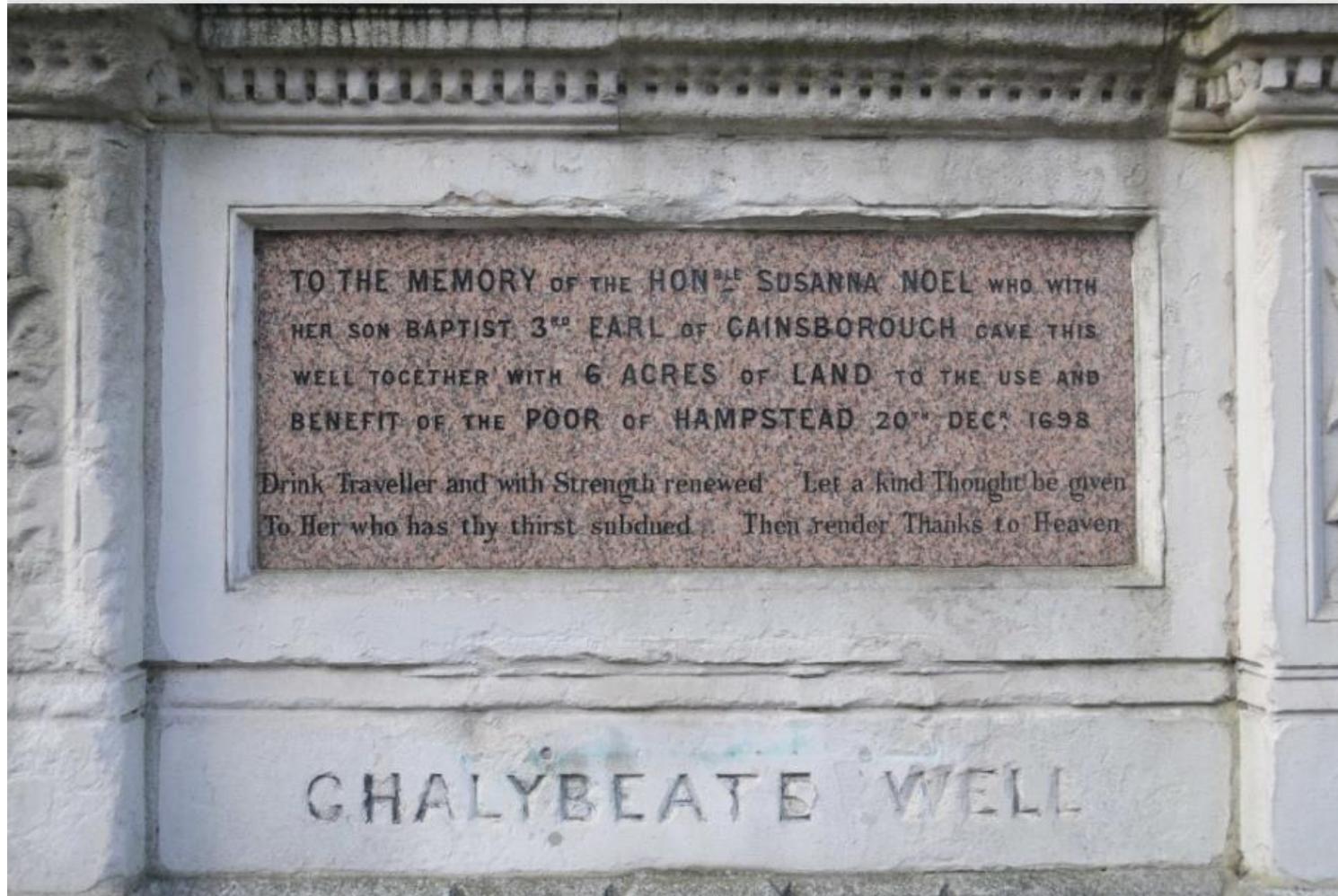
The name
'Chalybeate'
means that
the water
contains
iron.



A spring is a place where water comes up from an underground source.

The springs of Hampstead have a long history of providing supplies of water for the rest of London.

When the chalybeate were found, the high iron content made people believe that the water had medicinal properties. The high iron content also meant it wasn't suitable for drinking!



On the 20th December 1698 the Earl of Gainsborough and his guardian and mother, the Countess of Gainsborough gave six acres of land in the region of the Chalybeate Well, to be used to help/benefit the poor of Hampstead.

The medicinal value (health benefits) of the chalybeate waters began to be advertised from 1700.

A Long Room was erected (built) on the south side of Well Walk. This included a Pump Room where the chalybeate water could be drunk and an Assembly Room for dancing, concerts and other entertainment.

Have you ever walked past Kenwood House? It has a Bath House – you can find it at the steps of the café! It was designed as a plunge pool.



A sign on the inside of the Bath House's door reads: *"The Cold Bath – The Cold Bath is fed by a natural spring of chalybeate water. It was built in the early 18th century when cold plunge bathing became fashionable and was considered a healthy pursuit. The Bath was neglected for many years, and had filled up with silt by the 1980s, when excavation work started. The marble linings had been stripped out and the sides were caving in. Enough evidence was found in excavation to reconstruct the marble lined bath. The dome was restored, and the walls re-plastered. The painted finish is speculative, based on the decorative schemes popular around 1800."*



Water from the Chalybeate wells was bottled and sold. It was considered so special that it was sold with a guarantee it was original. Those that bought it were given a sealed ticket with a wolf rampant to prove it was the real thing!

Although Hampstead Wells was initially most successful and fashionable, its popularity declined in the 1800s due to competition with other fashionable London spas. The spa was demolished in 1882, although a water fountain was left behind.