

## Leehouse Farm

Ralph Oakden had Leehouse built in 1751. Where he went to school is not known, but he was educated and so often called upon to sign deeds and to act as a Trustee. He was married twice. By his first wife, Mary, he had a son Richard, who became a linen draper, first in Birmingham and later, in London. There was also a daughter Ellen and a son John. The second wife had five children, Hannah, Ann, Mary, Roger and Sarah.

In 1780 Ralph owned considerable property in the area, including Under the Lowe Farm, 50 acres, Leehouse Farm, 44 acres, Bridge House and Croft, 2 acres, on Waterfall Moor 4½ acres, Caldon Mill and six fields rented by John Blore, and a farm, a house and barn in Caldon.

Unfortunately he got into money difficulties. He invested his money in the Speedwell Mine Venture at Castleton, which turned out a failure. Ralph raised mortgages on his property owing over £1000. His wife became so distressed that she took her own life.

Ralph must have managed to save something as in 1884 his son Roger owned some property and land, and another son John Gould Oakden owned Leehouse Farm and the fields on the common. These were all rented by James Moore who has been mentioned in a previous chapter. His daughter, Elizabeth Moore married James Barker in 1832 and they farmed at Milkhill Gate.

They had 9 children, one of them, John marrying Mary Oakden and living at Caldon Grange.

James Moore died at Leehouse in 1848 and no more is known until 1874 when Thomas Mottram, a tailor aged 79 died there. He had married Frances Louisa Green. The Mottram family have occupied the farm since then. They have been well known in the village as auctioneers, Mr. Sam Mottram carrying on the tradition.