THE HUMMOCKY FIELD, or, more officially, Cow Common, is now ploughed up and most of its age-long wealth of plant life gone. Cow Common, no longer appropriately named, lies near Totternhoe in Bedfordshire. I visited it in June 1952 because I suspected that Carex hostiana DC. grew there and it seemed desirable to record its presence—or absence—before the growing threat of ploughing became an actuality.

I went to find Cow Common with the help of a little pencil sketch made by a colleague. There were several meadows at the end of the route, a gate leading into the most likely looking one. I opened it, and my wife, who shared my day's exploration, stepped into the field. Before I could join her she tripped and fell, hurting her leg. This was certainly the Hummocky Field!

A tiny stream flowed through the middle of it, and by the water in its bed grew tufts of Carex lepidocarpa Tausch. Alongside the streamlet, clear of its banks, C. distans L. occurred plentifully. Still further from the stream my guess came true: I had found C. hostiana in the Hummocky Field! Not far from its somewhat larger relative, C. distans, this neat little sedge with the silvery-margined glumes occurred in patches for some distance parallel to the two other species.

At an earlier date Dr. John Dony, author of the Flora of Bedfordshire, had found somewhere here specimens of a sedge which were determined (not by me) as a hybrid between C. distans and C. lepidocarpa. As, however, this plant bears glumes which are awnless and often acute at the apex, as in C. hostiana but not characteristic of C. distans, it seems highly probable that C. hostiana is one of the parents. It is not in dispute that C. lepidocarpa is the other parent. Specimens have been placed in the Kew herbarium.

A description of the hybrid follows.


Plant loosely tufted. **Stems** curved-erect, 30-40 cm. tall, 0.75-1 mm. thick below, smooth below but scabrous on the acute angles of the rhachis. **Leaves** much shorter than the stems, 2-3 mm. wide, flat or flattish, lower reduced to pale and almost bladeless sheaths. **Spikes**
3-4, usually 3, subdense-flowered, uppermost male, terminating the stem, slenderly cylindric, but somewhat tapering at each end, 2-2.5 cm. long, 2-2.75 mm. thick, lateral spikes female, more or less cylindric, base often slightly thicker, 1-1.6 cm. long, 4.5-5.5 mm. thick, upper subsessile or on shortly, lower on rather longly, exserted peduncles, upper at a node 2.5-4 cm. below the male spike, lower 4.5-13 cm. distant from the upper female spike. Bracts subfoliaceous, 4-8 cm. long, upper shortly lower longly sheathing; sheaths in front, at the mouth, prolonged into a short membranous tongue. Female glumes ovate, acuminate, flattish-cymbiform, apex acute to obtuse, 3-3.3 mm. long, 1.8-2 mm. wide, light castaneous, often whitish at the base and irregularly and widely so on the margins, midrib slender, from slightly failing to reach to forming a firm tip at the apex. Utricles shrunken and compressed, mostly broadly elliptic but a few obovate or ovate, 3.4-3.6 mm. long, 1.5-1.8 mm. broad, obscurely few-nerved to many-nerved, narrowly marginate, glabrous, straightish, slightly spreading, lowest few subpatent, greenish or yellowish-green above, white below or at the base, very shortly stipitate, mostly abruptly or subabruptly beaked; beak not or scarcely tapering, compressed, 1.4-1.6 mm. long, narrowly marginate, margins very sparsely to subdensely rough, pale below, castaneous above, bidentate; teeth somewhat diverging. Achene undeveloped.

V.c. 30, Bedfordshire; Totternhoe = The Litany = Hummocky Field, 1951, J. D. Dony, 1469 (Herb. Kew).