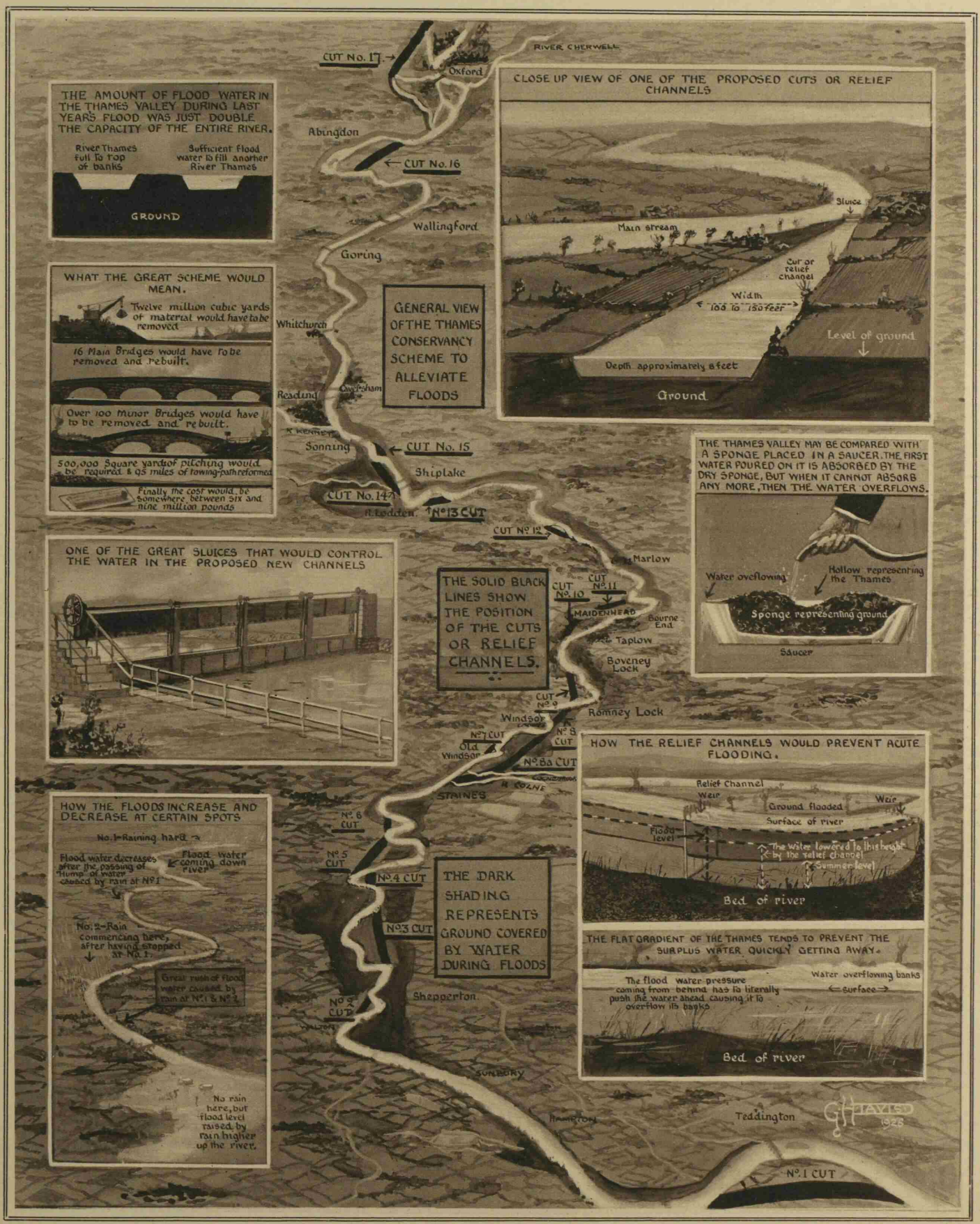
CAN THAMES FLOODS BE PREVENTED? A POSSIBLE £9,000,000 PLAN.

DRAWN BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, G. H. DAVIS, WITH THE ASSISTANCE AND CO-OPERATION OF THE THAMES CONSERVANCY.



FLOOD-PREVENTION IN THE THAMES VALLEY: THE CONSERVANCY'S GREAT SCHEME OF RELIEF CHANNELS.

The recent heavy flooding in the Thames Valley has once more raised the question whether this overflow of the river can be prevented, and has drawn attention to a scheme evolved several years ago by the engineers of the Thames Conservancy. When it was evolved, the Engineer to the Conservators considered that the gigantic work could be done for about £3,000,000, but to-day the estimated cost would be nearer £9,000,000. It consists of widening the river in places, raising the banks, and, chiefly, in providing cuts or relief channels to straighten out the dangerous bends. The total capacity of the Thames when running bank-high is about 4,500,000,000 gallons, equivalent to one day's ordinary winter flood discharge at Teddington. If, therefore, it were possible to empty the river completely, before a flood, relief would be afforded for, at most, one day's flow. For example, in the flood of 1910, which lasted for some twenty days at a flow above 4,500,000,000 gallons, with a maximum discharge of 8,134,000,000 gallons, had the river been empty at the commencement of the flood on December 5, it would have filled again on the 6th. The scheme evolved was to reduce the flood levels between Oxford and Teddington, and keep within the river banks a volume equivalent to the maximum discharge at Teddington of 7,000,000,000 to 8,000,000,000 gallons per day, the amount of an average flood. When originally submitting the scheme the Thames Conservancy Board drew attention to the great cost, and stated that to some extent the amenities of the river would be destroyed. It was also questioned whether the result would justify the expenditure. On the other hand, something is needed to prevent this almost annual flooding, and experts consider the scheme illustrated the only real solution.