

NEW

Can Yip (left) and Paul bring
La Buslière back to life?

**Help! We Bought
A Village**

Channel 4 • weekdays

REALITY

Normandy is a stunning corner of France, but it contains many beautiful hamlets lying forgotten and unloved after being heavily bombed during World War II. These properties are now 10-a-penny to buy, but many are in such a bad state they are ready to be demolished.

Step in the plucky Brits featured in this new series, who aim to take on abandoned villages on the Continent and get them back up and running.

'We don't come from money, and we don't have much of it. We were renting in England,' says Paul Mappley, a landscape gardener from Kent who appears in episode one with his partner David Ward ('Yip').

'Then in 2019, we went to La Buslière in Normandy, to have a look at this cottage for sale. It was £10,000, and the minute we drove over the hill

onto the lane we knew it was a no-brainer, and we wanted it.'

From there, Paul and Yip's vision grew, until they made the decision to purchase the rest of the run-down village for a bargain price.

'We sold things and worked our butts off and just raised the money,' says Yip. 'Suddenly we

were custodians of a place with a number of cottages – all for €24,000. Some might say we were nuts to take on all these buildings, with very little money or

experience doing up property, and it has been tricky at times.'

One year on, and Paul and Yip are slowly renovating their investment, bit by bit, and are enjoying a laid-back, rent-free lifestyle in France.

'We've had a go at most stuff, and we've been very successful. We've been learning on the job and that's been really joyous. It's lovely finding out you are good at something new,' says Yip. 'We wouldn't have been able to pay anyone to do it, anyway!'

Cecile Metcalf

**'It has
been
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**Brits rescue unloved
villages in Europe
in a new series**

Normandy LANDING

NEW