

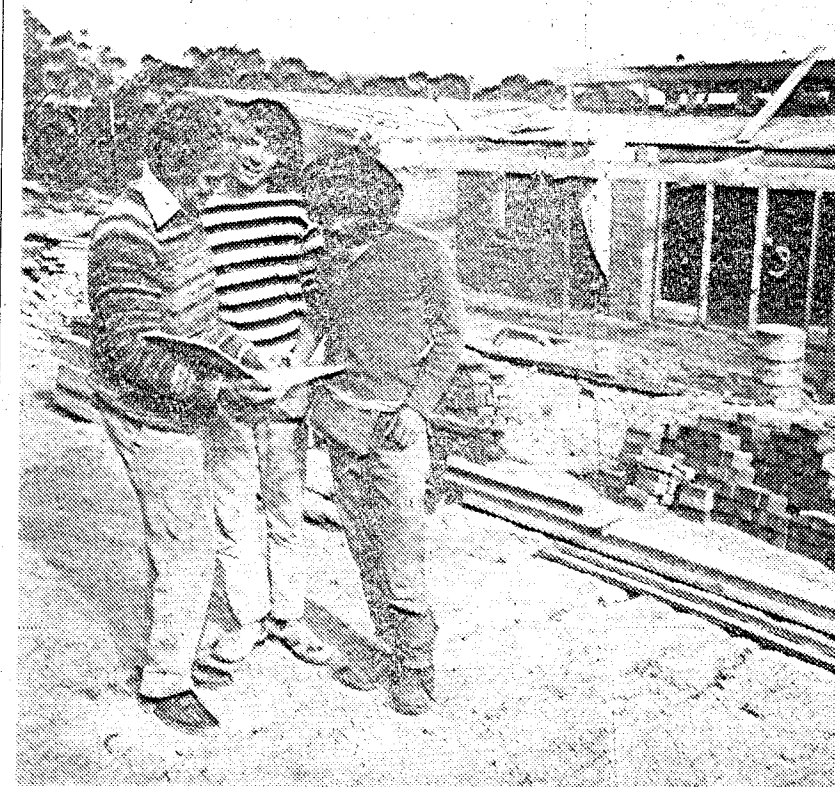
OUR NEW BOUTIQUE
OPENS SHORTLY
AT 252 GEORGE STREET
NEAR AUSTRALIA SQUARE

MUNROSPUN marches in

In best British fashion. Brisk, crisp coats that meet winter on its own terms, with warmth and lots of classic fashion sense. Below, camel colour blissfully soft pure angora, sizes 10-16, \$148. Right, Scottish tweed in autumnal tones, 10-18, \$132.

PIAZZA, 2.0949,
74 CASTLEMEAD STREET,
AND CENTREPOINT, CITY,
DOUBLE BAY, CHATSWOOD,
PYMBLE AND CANBERRA,
AND SOON AT GEORGE ST.

Munrospun



Alistair Knox, left, his son Hamish, centre, and Eddie Gray, on the site of a 50-square mud house being built at Eltham.

Up Eltham (Vic) way the name of Alistair Knox is mud.

In fact to Alistair, the natural hues of straw-laced dirt are a thing of beauty and, he hopes, a joy for ever.

Mr Knox is a leading spirit in the movement which has made Eltham's 103-square miles a unique place to live.

The mud houses he has designed have given the leafy shire a quiet serenity in which the bush, not man, dominates.

Among those who live in them are the playwright David Williamson and artists Peter Glass and John Serle.

Earth and tranquillity

A stockbroker retreats each day from the market place to a 50-square earth house designed by Mr Knox. A psychiatrist finds tranquillity on his couch in a 30-square version.

There is a growing number of people seeking escape behind the silent cool of the thick mud walls. Many are building houses themselves to Mr Knox's design.

Others have designed and built their own — including the artist Neil Douglas and the film director Tim Burstall.

Eltham's mud-sliding began back in 1855 when a blacksmith called Souter built a mud-brick cottage above his stone forge in Falkner Street.

Today, with additions, the house stands in a wild garden and is probably the oldest inhabited earth building in Melbourne.

The author, Alan Marshall, in his history of Eltham, says that not much earth building was done there until 1934, when Justus Jorgensen, an architect and artist, began to build Montsalvat.

Montsalvat is a fantasy of stone, timber and earth. The earth took the form of pise de terre (rammed earth) and mud-bricks, and set the pattern for Eltham's environmental building after World War II.

Another early mud-brick enthusiast was Horrie Judd, a builder, who holds the record for making mud-bricks without a machine — 256 in one day.

Today the demand is so great there is a machine at Hurstbridge which can turn out 1,400 a day, and another man is making them by hand at Cottles Bridge, near the artists' colony where the Archibald Prize-winner Cliff

ton Pugh lives in an earth house. Mr Knox began designing and building mud-brick houses commercially in 1947 and one of his early jobs was a weekend cottage for the late Dorian Le Gallienne, the composer, and Dick Downing (now Professor Downing, ABC chairman).

The original building was a mere 36ft by 18ft; but over the next 15 years several artists worked on it, including Clifton Pugh, who made and laid the mud bricks for the bedroom wing back in 1954.

Professor Downing has lived there since 1954. He married in 1965. His wife already had six children and they had to extend the house.

Today it is one of the biggest earth houses in Victoria — a rambling structure of galleries and verandas which blends into the bushy hillside.

Professor Downing said: "I am very enthusiastic about mud-brick houses — they are in a natural material which lends itself to a bush setting and gives good insulation."

"The size and shape of the bricks limit the architecture, preventing a too-fussy design."

Economic rationale

"The only disadvantage is that they are very labour intensive; but just after the war when we began building, mud-bricks had an economic rationale because traditional materials were scarce and dear."

The same situation exists again today — Alistair Knox is building a 50-square mud-brick house for a couple and their four children opposite his own earth house.

Unlike most building jobs today, it hasn't lost a day through material shortage — hardly surprising since the bricks were made by hand on the site.

The bricks were made from mud excavated when the site was levelled, mixed with straw and placed in steel moulds. The bricks, when sun-dried as in biblical times, are tested to at least 150 lb per square inch pressure, 10 times the required strength.

Mud is used instead of mortar to lay them; the cost of 100 square feet of mud brick wall is about \$65 compared with about \$80 in solid brick.

Apart from the

Where the houses are of mud

From a Special Correspondent in Melbourne

roofs which curve gently in sympathy with the slopes of Eltham; woodwork is stained to unobtrusive neutrality.

The popularity of mud-brick houses is enormous. Mr Knox said: "Their stature has either risen or declined depending on your point of view — earth has become the medium of managing directors."

But while managing

bricks, most of the other materials in the house are secondhand; the cost is about \$1000 a square.

In the new 50-square house Mr Knox is building, the lofty ceiling of the great central room is supported by two 12in by 12in wooden pillars from the old Sennitts ice-cream factory in South Melbourne.

Over the fireplace is a huge red-ironbark beam which was once part of the old Union Bridge across the Murray at Albury.

The inside of the outer walls is rendered with mud and cowdung. Interior partitions are solid vertical planks.

Alistair Knox is not an architect; but he is a corporate member of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

Sitting at an adze-hewn refectory table made by his son, in the vast central room of his nine-year-old earth house, Mr Knox explained the philosophy behind his buildings.

"A mud-brick building is a community matter — an amateur building enables someone to be involved in their buildings in a much more positive way."

"At present 10 of the homes I have designed are being built by the people who will live in them."

Sense of serenity

Mr Knox believes that building in earth is the essence of true environmental building. An earth house has a sense of serenity.

He said: "The character of other countries is based on great men, reformers, wars, Australia is unique in that it is the landscape which has forged the Australian character."

"Three things make Australia unique — it is sun-dominated, it is survival conscious, and water-hungry. Environmental builders should express these factors and create buildings which blend into the landscape."

In fact, Alistair



The mud-brick home of the chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Professor R. I. Downing, and his family, blends into its bushland setting at Eltham.

Shopping Around IMPERIAL ARCADE with Yvette

Jewellery specials
Looking for something special in the way of Easter gifts, I found some real "gems" on the Pitt Street level of the Imperial . . . at Andre's (pronounced as in the French, Andre's). . . and here are just three of my discoveries: 9ct gold opal rings at \$19.95, 9ct birthstone rings at the same good-value price, plus Alex automatic day and date stainless steel men's watches, really a "gift" at \$39.50 (they WERE \$61.50!)

The right bag . . .
This is just the time for the right bag to complete that going-away outfit, for ladies' day at the races, or any Easter occasion . . . and I found a treasure-trove at Arcadia Bags on the Castlereagh Street level. Here's a good "frill-stance": under-arm leather clutch bag with gold chain handle in any new autumn-winter colour you care for, at just \$23.95 . . . at Arcadia Bags.

Beautiful nightwear
No wonder they have three boutiques in the Imperial Arcade! Can-Can, I mean . . . they have such beautiful things . . . like nightwear from Lucas, Kaiser and Lynn Maid, exclusive to Can-Can . . . AND they have gowns, caftans, all kinds of leisurewear . . . I'd suggest you call in and see for yourself, but soon, while stocks last in this nasty time of shortages . . . you won't be disappointed.

Fashion parade
Fashions from many of the 120 wonderful Imperial Arcade shops will be on parade at the Chevron Hotel this Saturday (April 6) at 2 p.m. . . modelled by Miss Australia entrants . . . and a big feature will be for Easter Brides with full honeymoon wardrobe . . . tickets are \$2.50 (phone 451 9022 for reservations), and proceeds go to the Spastic Centre . . . meantime at the Arcade you must see the biggest Easter Egg ever made, anywhere in the world (it's by the famous Darrel Lea chocolate people) and enter the 2CH-Imperial Arcade contest for a valuable prize . . . head for the Gallery Level!

Amethyst display
It's well worth anyone's while "exploring" the Gallery Level of the Imperial, as a matter of fact, amongst other delights, you'll find the largest display of Amethysts ever featured by the fascinating Gem & Lapidary Centre. The Centre, by the way, has everything for the lapidary or collector as well as a beautiful range of jewellery and gift suggestions.

New Michelle
Down to the Pitt Street level again and it's fun to see the newly arrived winter range of slacks, suits, long and short winter dresses, Fun Furs by Junior Look and many, many more at Michelle B. Originals (formerly Michelle Boden). . . don't forget to see the braided skirts with matching blouses . . . sizes 8 to 18 in most garments. Size 20 available by special order.

Sculptured pottery
Modern sculptured pottery to delight any collector is among the fascinating range of gifts, carefully and lovingly assembled at Mary's Corner Shop (remember Pippa Pim?) from among the finest artists and craftsmen throughout the world. English antimony liqueur and wine glasses, miniature brassware, Swiss cowbells, Italian music boxes, Blue Danube china — these are just a few at Mary's Corner, Gallery level.

Autumn in pure wool
Pure wool, uncrushable, finely fashioned, the selection of new knitted suits, pant suits and dresses with matching full-length coats at Midnette (on the Castlereagh Street level) make wonderful buying for autumn and winter . . . Midnette, I'm sure you remember, are known for their hard-to-get Montague knitted tops, too, and they have a new shipment from Paris, now!

Furs for all occasions
Not only all occasions, but all pockets, I might add . . . they're at Rodny's Fur Salon, also on the Castlereagh Street level of the Imperial . . . and the range goes from, well, a sumptuous black diamond mink to more modestly priced but gorgeous to wear soft leather or suede coats . . . and how about a hat to match — all from Rodny's?

My son and a set of wheels

(Continued from page 5)

pitifully and clicked his teeth. By this time the protest meeting was also looking at me. It would be all around the village that as a supporter of green hane I was less than reliable. The sergeant and his constable drove off waving to me I waved back.

The wife of a Professor at Canberra whose son has a motor cycle consoled me at a party. Her son had ridden from Canberra to Bathurst to attend a rally and had parked his bike at the end of a row of other bikes.

He had not liked the look of the gang assembled there so after a while he returned to see that his treasure was safe,

thoughtfully fingering a length of chain in his pocket. Sure enough they had gathered around his bike, looking sinister.

"You own this set of wheels, man?"

"What of it?"

"Well . . ." they crowded closer. The leader slowly drew something from his pocket. My friend's son gripped the length of chain.

"We thought we'd invite you to join our club." In his hand the leader laid a card which said, "South Knotsville Club. The Social Lepers." The dark, bearded faces smirked a welcome.

"You see," the professor's wife said, "they even frighten each other."

B
cr
At
ne
ing
we
Stre
pump
meds
how
down
effect
clients
\$39.50
any of
include
larger
The pit
full 15
ing one
the pit
just \$3
cause to
long will
prices. It
the plush
by just a
children.
Point y
Fontarel
Fontarel
vast alien
their light
are non-a
young con
cosmetic r
without de
experiment
like some
might well
gies and in
billies by
favour of
little tube
out a sn
again, ne
colour, r
respectiv
which is a
subtle to
Lipstick
silver c
foundat
comple
the lac
top th
wastel
Street
Repes
and f
These
time
stand
and
lined
pool
eve
pas
with
red.
\$50
this
Or
10c
the
ec
fe
h
P
T