

New DRIVE FOR HARRIS TWEED



UPERB colourings, changing shades and tones that feast the eye with a palette altering with each passing moment and each passing cloud.

Had the Western Isles not been there for the pattern book it would have been necessary to invent them.

Since you ask, the Western Isles of Scotland are beautiful because they have had years of practice. More, probably, than anywhere else for geologists agree that they are the oldest land surface in the world — dry land before the Alps were pushed up by volcanic explosion from the bottom of the sea, senior by aeons to those

Rocky Mountains that give splendour to an America which always claims to be 'firstest with the mostest'.

In the Isles there are mysterious relics of days — of millennia — far beyond history. There is a stone circle at Callanish which was old long before Rome was born, and whose less precise masonry suggests that Stonehenge comes of

a later and more sophisticated era.

At Carloway Broch, not many miles from Callanish stands the still well-preserved circular, dry-stone fortified tower which has stood there for at least two thousand years. And these silent witnesses manifest a ghostly presence of a once-upon-a-time, well-ordered, primeval society with a clear knowledge of leverage and of astronomy, and with burial rituals and religious beliefs which today leave no echos save those evoked by their indestructible monuments.

But certainly there is a special flavour, a special richness of culture here, and it cannot be denied that

submerged or subconscious it has produced among its lifestyle a fabric which might easily be considered the most famous in the world.

"Tweed" after all is a generic term. "Harris" tweed is that much more specific. Once exclusive, "Worsted" has spread from its tiny east Anglian township to production anywhere and everywhere. "Saxony" is only the Scottish description of the Saxonish (*sassenach*) form of cloth worn in England — the term has dismissive foreign connotations. "Harris" is Harris, and comes from there. In and out of fashion's popularity listings it may go, according to passing whim,

but it goes and comes back again for ever.

At the moment it is listed for a strong return for more reasons than one.

Fashion beckons, practicality demands, and the combined forces of legislation and administration are combining to establish its promotion and marketing on a forceful level which hitherto has offered its delights to the world simply on the 'better mousetrap' principle.

Like much of British industry, British fabric suffered in the post-War decades from a belief that reputation was built by production alone. Mar-

See the colours! Where does the Harris Tweed designer find his inspiration? He looks out of the window.

A few glimpses of the Western Isles' incredible backdrop to their fabric production: lower left — Luskentyre on Harris. Below — the beach at Uig on Lewis. Left — Loch Arnol agus Bragar, on Lewis.



A car-load of colourful Tweed from Dormeuil of London and Paris.

