

SIMPLE STYLE

THE WATERPROOF COAT

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**

Alongside the collapsible umbrella, the waterproof coat, stowed away in a bag, is the most useful of items at this time of year. Not only does it deliver instant cover when April springs its showers upon you, but it offers the chance to feel really smug. You are that person who remembered not only to buy it, but to pack it and bring it with you as you ventured out that morning. No shivering in shop doorways waiting for clouds to move on for you. No sheltering at bus stops being drenched by passing cars. You can pull up its hood, do up its poppers, and stride purposefully forward, cloaked in an item that offers shower-proofing at the very least.

You may know the waterproof coat by other names. Children on a school outing or off for a spot of puddle-splashing may be encouraged by a parent to wear a 'cagoule'*. This lightweight garment, often made from 100% nylon, was patented in the early 1960s by Noel Bibby, a former marine who created a range of waterproof clothing for children and adults under the brand name Peter Storm. (Peter Storm went on to become a byword for affordable outdoorwear sported by pensioners visiting local attractions.)

The distinguishing identifiers of a cagoule are that it is lightweight; that it can be packed



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away (sometimes, cleverly, into its own pocket); that it has a hood; that it zips up the front and that it covers approximately two-thirds of the body.

Pac-A-Macs, and the less well-known Cag-in-a-Bag, are flimsy versions of the cagoule, which may protect you from a shower burst but probably not from a lengthy downpour. Although they have had a revival of fortune with festival-goers, they are not as popular now as they were in the 1980s when they were immortalised by Madness in their song ‘Pac-A-Mac’ (“From my pocket I pick a Pac-A-Mac”). Pac-A-Macs usually come with elasticated cuffs and are pulled on over the head. They also come in many colours and patterns, some more tasteful than others.

Fortunately, many attractive and stylish waterproofs now exist (see below). The cagoule was even elevated to fashionable status when Louis Vuitton sent a few down the runway last year. The only thing to remember is not to call yours ‘an anorak’. Anoraks are strictly for, erm, anoraks. **S**

* The word ‘cagoule’ comes from the French ‘cowl’ or monk’s hood which relates to its all-enveloping properties.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

THE UPDATE



THE
CLASSIC

Reversible raincoat | £80
A touch of the sou'westers about this jolly waterproof. seasaltcornwall.co.uk



TWO
WITH A
TWIST

Elvington long rain jacket | £38
With a cheerful rose pattern to dispel wet weather gloom. cathkidston.com



Go Lightly packaway parka | £45
Easily stashed in a bag so handy for unexpected showers. joules.com