

THE VINDOLANDA RUN

(Vindolanda was a busy Roman fort close to Hadrian's wall)

*In winter, instead of Roman feet
tramping the iron frost fields,
soldiers slid slalom-like over snow
riding on upturned shields.*

*It was wonderful fun, the Romans could think
of nothing that they enjoyed more,
a toboggan run down Cuddy's Crag,
much better than going to war!*

*And fresh recruits would think it easy
as off on their shields they flew,
till they'd hit a rock and topple off
and the moorland air would turn blue*

*with Latin oaths and the curses they flung
at an unsympathetic sky-
then they'd dust themselves off and climb back up
to the top for another try.*

*In the ice and snow it was all systems go
for the soldiers patrolling the wall,
they'd challenge each other to see who could travel
the longest without a fall.*

*Reputations were made or lost
on a run that went really well.
From around the Empire soldiers would beg
for a post at this once northern hell.*

*And no one thought of war any more,
Pict bashing had had its day.
The Romans were far too busy
inviting their enemies round to play!*

Brian Moses