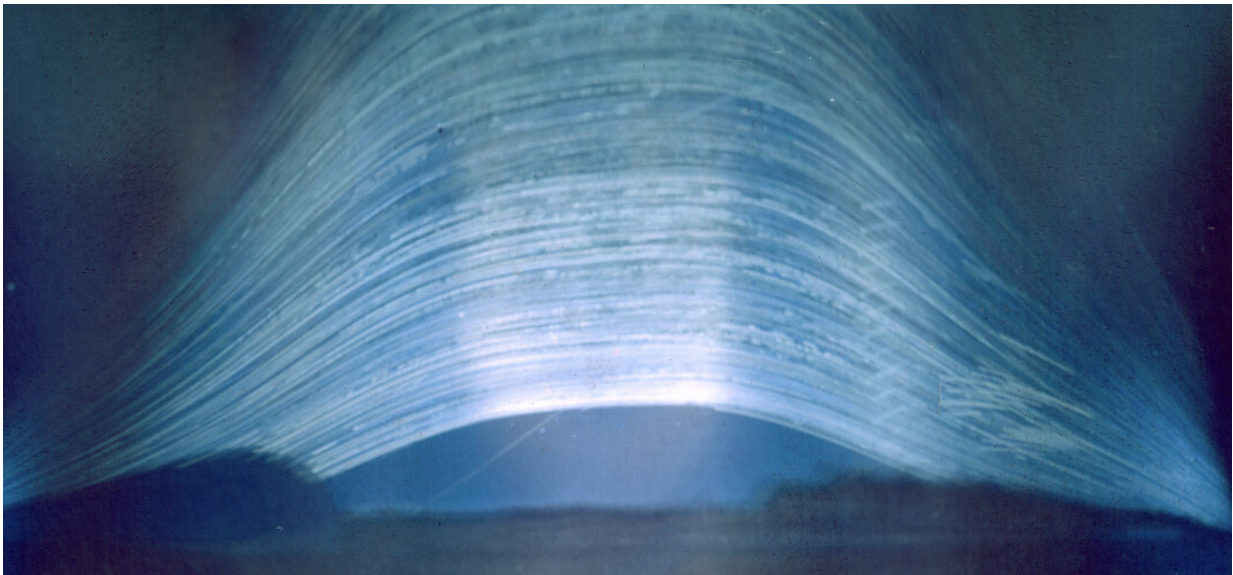


# Longest known exposure photograph ever captured using a beer can

December 17 2020

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Credit: University of Hertfordshire

A photograph thought to be the longest exposure image ever taken has been discovered inside a beer can at the University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury Observatory.

The image was taken by Regina Valkenborgh, who began capturing it towards the end of her MA Fine Art degree at the University of Hertfordshire in 2012. It shows 2,953 arced trails of the sun, as it rose and fell between summer and winter over a period of eight years and one

month. The dome of Bayfordbury's oldest telescope is visible to the left of the photograph and the atmospheric gantry, built halfway through the exposure, can be seen from the center to the right.

Regina was interested in capturing images without the use of modern technology; in this case using a beer can lined with photographic paper as a [pinhole camera](#). She placed a can on one of the Observatory's telescopes, which had been forgotten about until September this year when it was finally removed by the Observatory's Principal Technical officer, David Campbell.

Long exposure photography is a technique used to show the passage of time in a scene, achieved when a camera's shutter is left open for a long period. This technique is common across different types of photography, including urban and landscape. German artist Michael Wesely is thought to hold the current record for the longest exposure image taken, which is four years and eight months.

Regina Valkenborgh said: "It was a stroke of luck that the picture was left untouched, to be saved by David after all these years. I had tried this technique a couple of times at the Observatory before, but the photographs were often ruined by moisture and the photographic paper curled up. I hadn't intended to capture an exposure for this length of time and to my surprise, it had survived. It could be one of, if not the, longest exposures in existence."

Regina is now a photography technician at Barnet and Southgate College.

Provided by University of Hertfordshire

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