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A double hoax?

The "Daily Express" states that a professional photographer (name not published) walked into the office last Friday with the claim that he was the author of one of the greatest hoaxes ever perpetrated on scientists and astronomers in this country. He claimed that he alone was responsible for the "meteoric" displays confidently thought to have been seen all over England on September 6, displays that resulted in highly technical wrangles between famous scientists.

"The lights which were seen flashing across the sky that night and were thought to be meteors," he said, "were caused by the ignition of bags of ordinary photographic flashlight powder which I sent into the air attached to gas-filled balloons.

"The balloons that I sent up, six tied together, had reached a height of some five thousand feet when the powder burst into flame. There was a deafening explosion as the balloons burst and flames shot from the powder, and then the damp ball shot through the air with a sizzling sound before it burned out."

Further press reports mention that the photographer made the experiment for amusement, and also with the object of finding whether any advertising "stunt" could be incorporated with it. Astronomers declared that the phenomena observed could not have been caused in this way.

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