

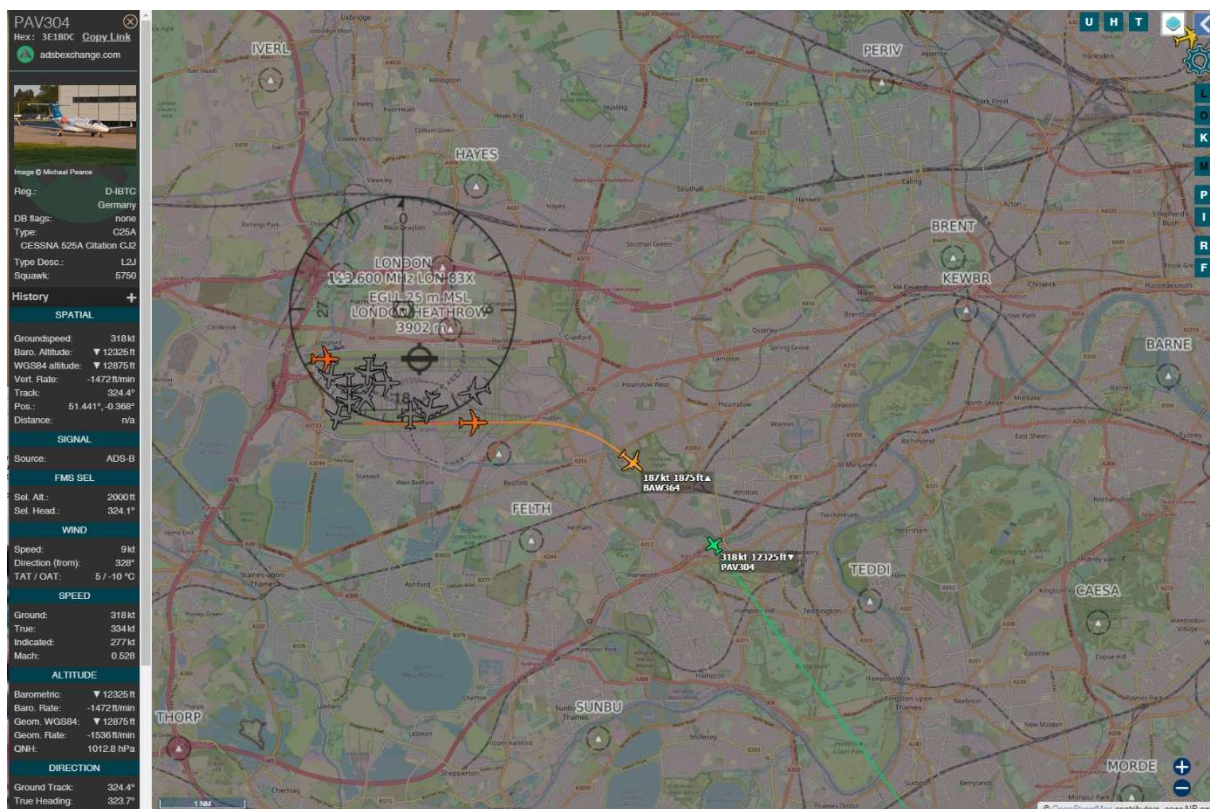
Airprox report number 2023117

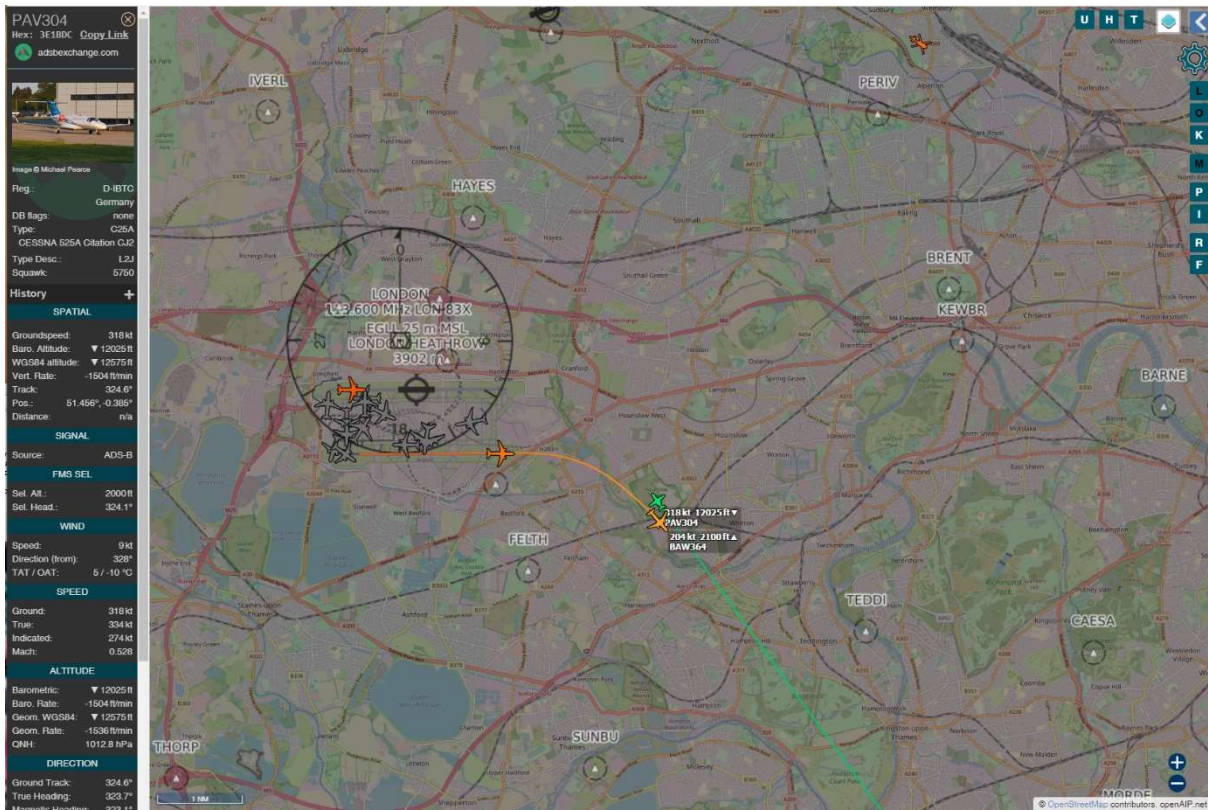
A320 pilot reports Cessna Citation as a drone

The UKAB have published airprox report 2023117 detailing an event at 19:51 on 4th June 2023. The pilot of an A320 reported that at 1700ft on climb-out from London Heathrow a large drone had passed 200ft directly overhead the cockpit. UKAB have classified this as *'a situation where safety had been much reduced below the norm to the extent that safety had not been assured.'*

Analysis by Airprox Reality Check of ADS-B data reveals that A320 G-EUOG took off and turned right onto a South Easterly heading. As the A320 passed through the approximate height stated, Cessna Citation D-IBTC flew directly overhead on a reciprocal course. The Citation was approximately two miles higher than reporting a/c, so would have appeared drone-sized. The closing speed was approximately 520knots.

There is indisputable proof of the presence of the Cessna Citation – and zero proof any drone was involved. If the reporting pilot had stated 'between us and the Citation' or something similar then it would be possible to imagine that two 'objects' (a 'possible drone' and a Citation) passed overhead within seconds of each other on similar bearings. But this is not the case. The reasonable conclusion is that the Cessna Citation was misidentified as a drone and that there was never any risk of a collision.





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Airprox Reality Check note that the majority of drone airproxes published by UKAB are wrong, and are in fact cases of distant full-sized aircraft being misidentified as nearby drones in fleeting encounters by startled pilots. Psychologists specialising in human visual perception have explained

that in the sky, humans have none of the cues they use on the ground to judge size and distance, making such errors commonplace.