

## **Airprox report number 2023122**

### **Chinook pilot reports Airbus A320 as a drone**

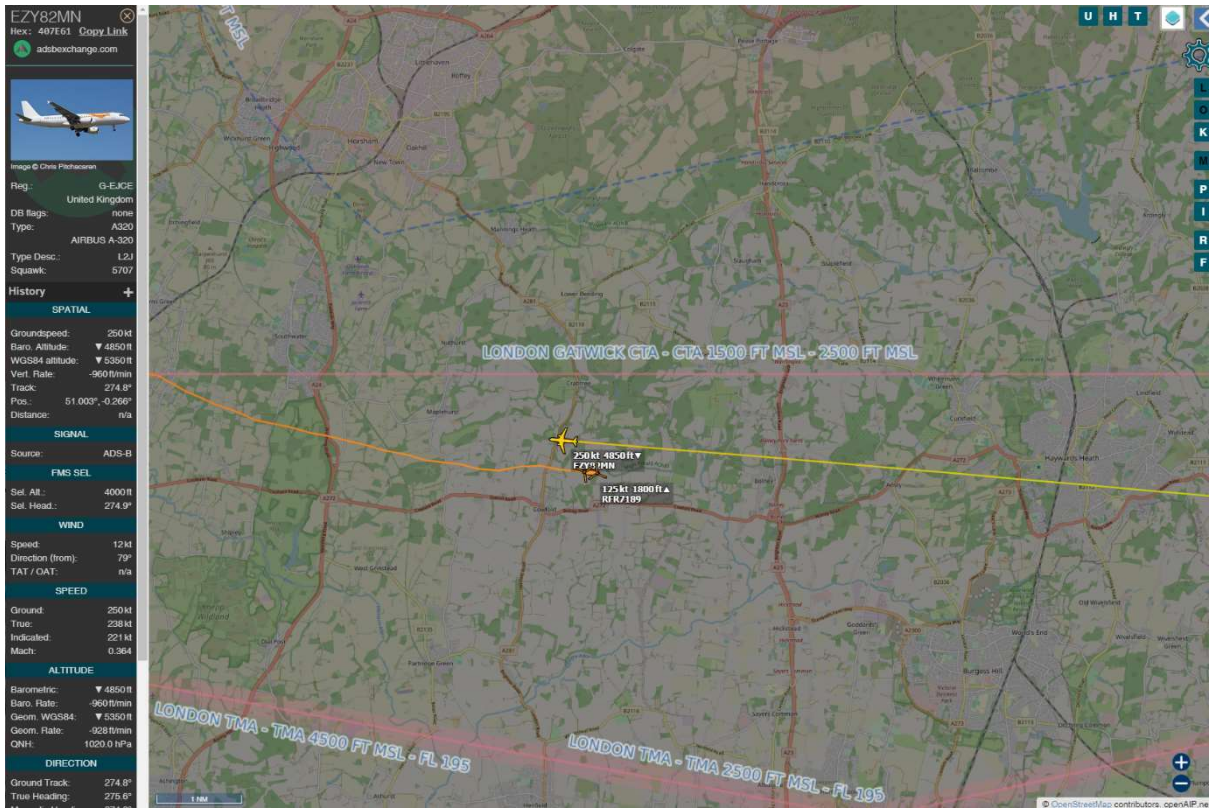
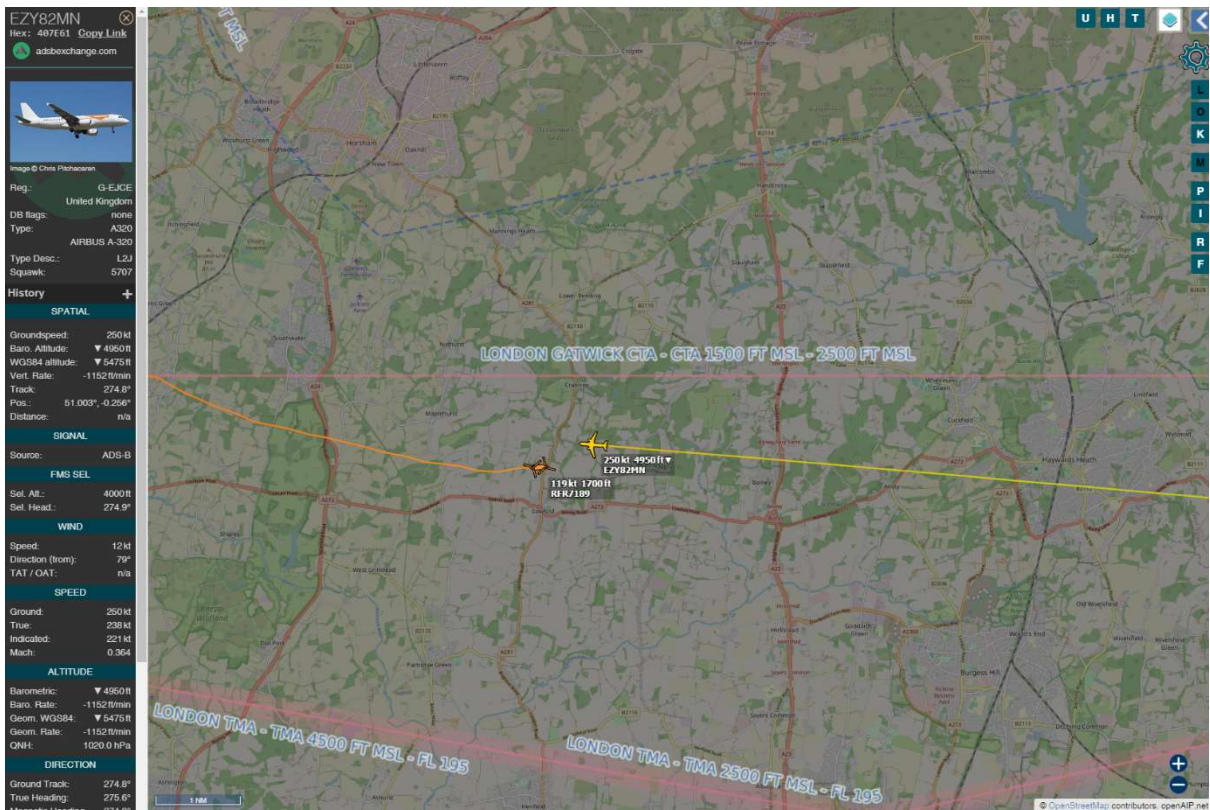
The UKAB have published airprox report 2023122 detailing an event on 15th June 2023 where the pilot of a Chinook reported that a crewman had spotted a white drone that missed them by less than 50m on their left-hand side whilst they were flying East towards Haywards Heath at 1800ft. UKAB have classified 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 at 09:44 Chinook ZA682 was approximately four miles West of Haywards Heath, flying East. It had an encounter with G-EJCE (A320) which passed down their left-hand side (as stated) at about a half-mile range, 2500ft higher. Closing speed was approximately 375knots.

The UKAB report gives no clues as to where the reporting crewman was seated, or which direction he was facing. (Crewmen sit in the back of the Chinook. Chinook rear seats generally face inwards or rearward.)

It is an indisputable fact that the A320 passed down the Chinook's left side at the time and location stated. There is no evidence to support the claim that any drone was present. If the pilot's (or crewman's) report had stated 'between us and the A320' or 'just after the A320 also passed down our left-hand side' or something similar then it would be possible to imagine that two 'objects' (a white drone, and a white A320) passed down the Chinook's left-hand side within seconds of each other on similar bearings. But this is not the case. The reasonable conclusion is that the white A320 was misidentified as a (very close) white drone and that there was never any risk of a collision. (It is noted that neither the Chinook pilot nor co-pilot saw a drone. They will almost certainly have seen the A320 pass higher to their left, but would have had plenty of time to correctly identify it.)

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.





Copyright: Bruno Lazaro