

## **Airprox report number 2023136**

### **Envoy IV pilot reports Airbus A330 as a drone**

The UKAB have published airprox report 2023136 detailing an event at 18:00hrs on 21st June 2023 where the pilot of an Envoy IV reported missing a drone by 10m at 9700ft whilst descending from the North towards Bristol. (The Envoy IV is the military name for the Dassault Falcon 900LX.) The pilot reported that the drone was silver/white with red flashes. UKAB have classified this as '*a situation where providence had played a major part in the incident and/or a definite risk of collision had existed.*'

Analysis by Airprox Reality Check of ADS-B data reveals that at the time the event was reported to the Bristol controller, and at the location stated, Envoy IV G-ZAHS, descending from the North through 10,000ft, has just had G-VGBR (Airbus A330) cross six miles ahead, and two miles higher, from left to right. At that distance an A330 would appear drone size. G-VGBR is white (with the lower white surfaces appearing silvery from slightly below) with red flashes: this precisely matches the white/silver and red reported. The reporting aircraft would have lost sight of G-VGBR before it crossed ahead, due to the restricted cockpit upward view and the Envoy being in a descent, producing the effect of G-VGBR disappearing over their left side.

It is an indisputable fact that the white/silver with red flashes A330 was in front of the reporting aircraft. There is no evidence to support the claim that any drone was present. (And the likelihood of a drone operating at nearly 10,000ft is infinitesimally small.) If the pilot's report had stated 'between us and the A330' or 'just after the A330 also passed our left-hand side' or something similar then it would be possible to imagine that two 'objects' (a white/silver with red flashes drone, and a white/silver with red flashes A330) passed over the Envoy's left side within seconds of each other. But this is not the case. The reasonable conclusion is that the distant white/silver with red flashes A330 was misidentified as being a nearby white/silver with red flashes drone, and that there was never any risk of a collision.

**RPR1333**  
Hex: 48708F Copy Link  
adsbxchange.com

Reg: G-ZAHS  
United Kingdom  
DB flags: none  
Type: DASSAULT Falcon 900  
Type Desc.: L3J  
Squawk: 6236

**History**

**SPATIAL**  
Groundspeed: 285 kt  
Baro. Altitude: ▼ 12125 ft  
WGS84 altitude: ▼ 12625 ft  
Vert. Rate: -2112 ft/min  
Track: 167.2°  
Pos.: 51.797, -2.867°  
Distance: n/a

**SIGNAL**  
Source: ADS-B

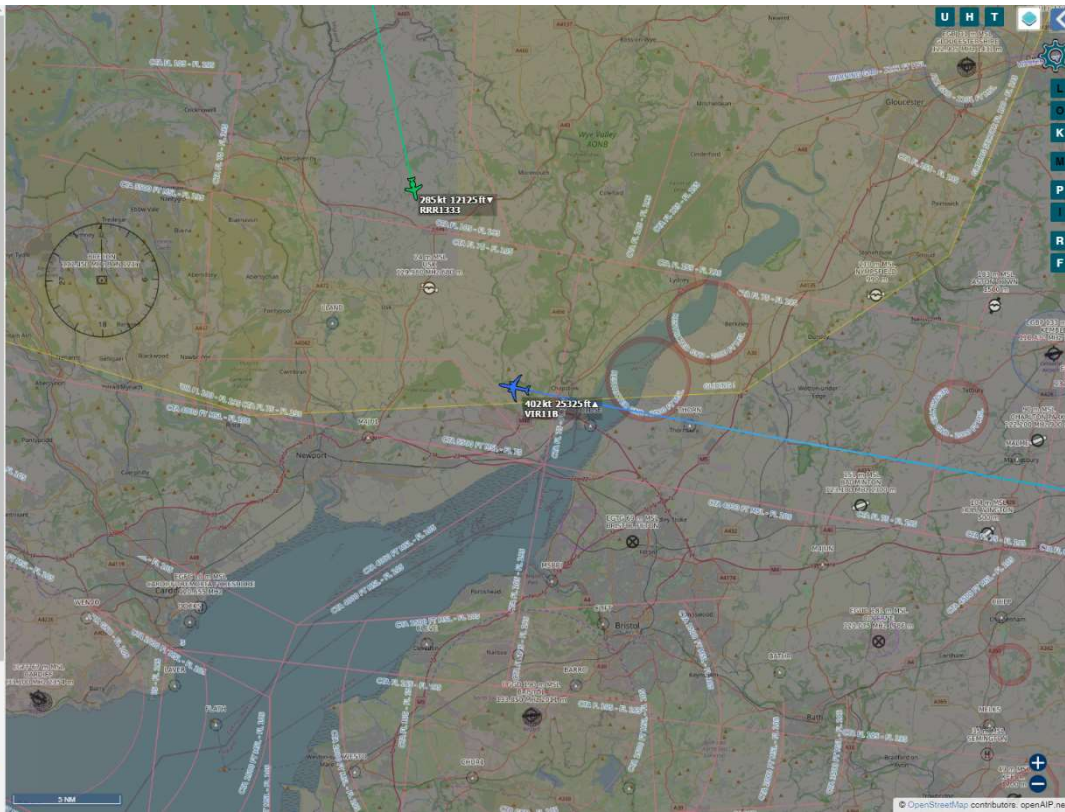
**FMS SEL**  
Sel. Alt.: 11008 ft  
Sel. Head.: n/a

**WIND**  
Speed: 28 kt  
Direction (from): 239°  
TAT / OAT: 8 / -4 °C

**SPEED**  
Ground: 285 kt  
True: 302 kt  
Indicated: 243 kt  
Mach: 0.472

**ALTITUDE**  
Barometric: ▼ 12125 ft  
Baro. Rate: -2112 ft/min  
Geom. WGS84: ▼ 12625 ft  
Geom. Rate: -2080 ft/min  
QNH: 1013.6 hPa

**DIRECTION**  
Ground Track: 167.2°  
True Heading: 172.2°  
Magnetic Heading: 172.4°



**RPR1333**  
Hex: 48708F Copy Link  
adsbxchange.com

Reg: G-ZAHS  
United Kingdom  
DB flags: none  
Type: F900  
DASSAULT Falcon 900  
Type Desc.: L3J  
Squawk: 6236

**History**

**SPATIAL**  
Groundspeed: 292 kt  
Baro. Altitude: ▼ 11925 ft  
WGS84 altitude: ▼ 12425 ft  
Vert. Rate: -2048 ft/min  
Track: 167.3°  
Pos.: 51.790, -2.865°  
Distance: n/a

**SIGNAL**  
Source: ADS-B

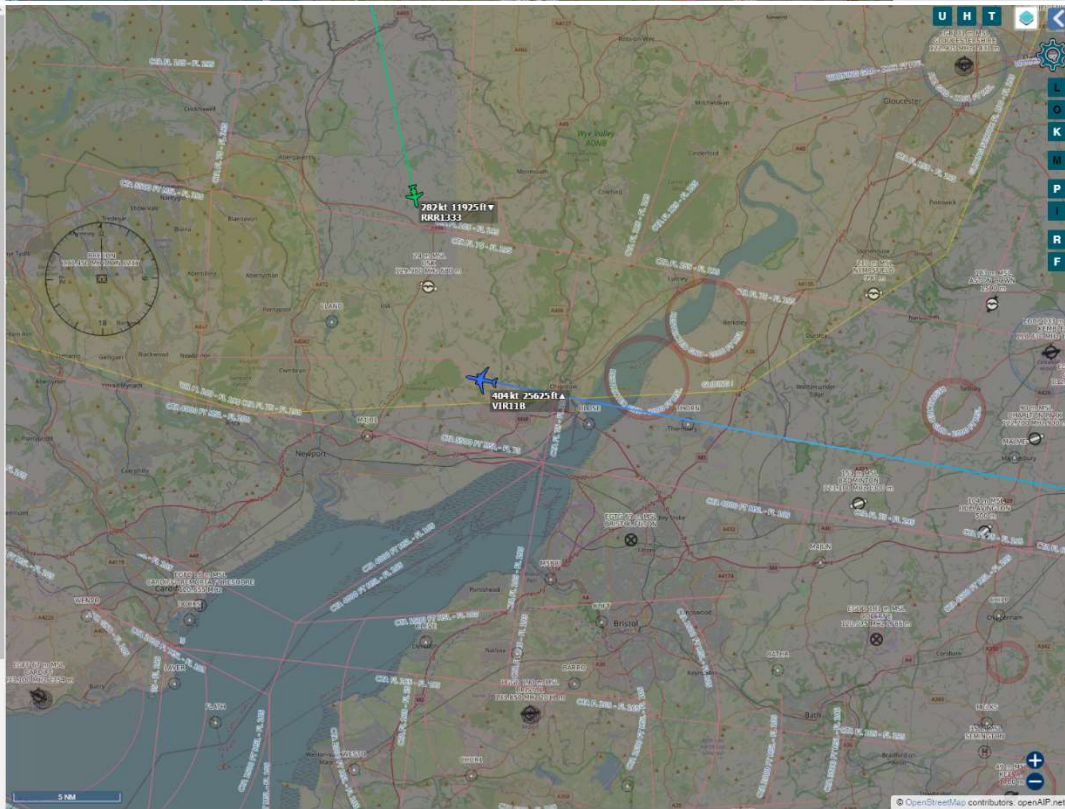
**FMS SEL**  
Sel. Alt.: 11008 ft  
Sel. Head.: n/a

**WIND**  
Speed: 28 kt  
Direction (from): 239°  
TAT / OAT: 8 / -4 °C

**SPEED**  
Ground: 292 kt  
True: 302 kt  
Indicated: 241 kt  
Mach: 0.472

**ALTITUDE**  
Barometric: ▼ 11925 ft  
Baro. Rate: -2048 ft/min  
Geom. WGS84: ▼ 12425 ft  
Geom. Rate: -2016 ft/min  
QNH: 1013.6 hPa

**DIRECTION**  
Ground Track: 167.3°  
True Heading: 172.2°  
Magnetic Heading: 172.4°





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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. The Envoy IV was travelling at 230knots and the Airbus A330 at 400knots. 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.