

### Airprox report number 2023137

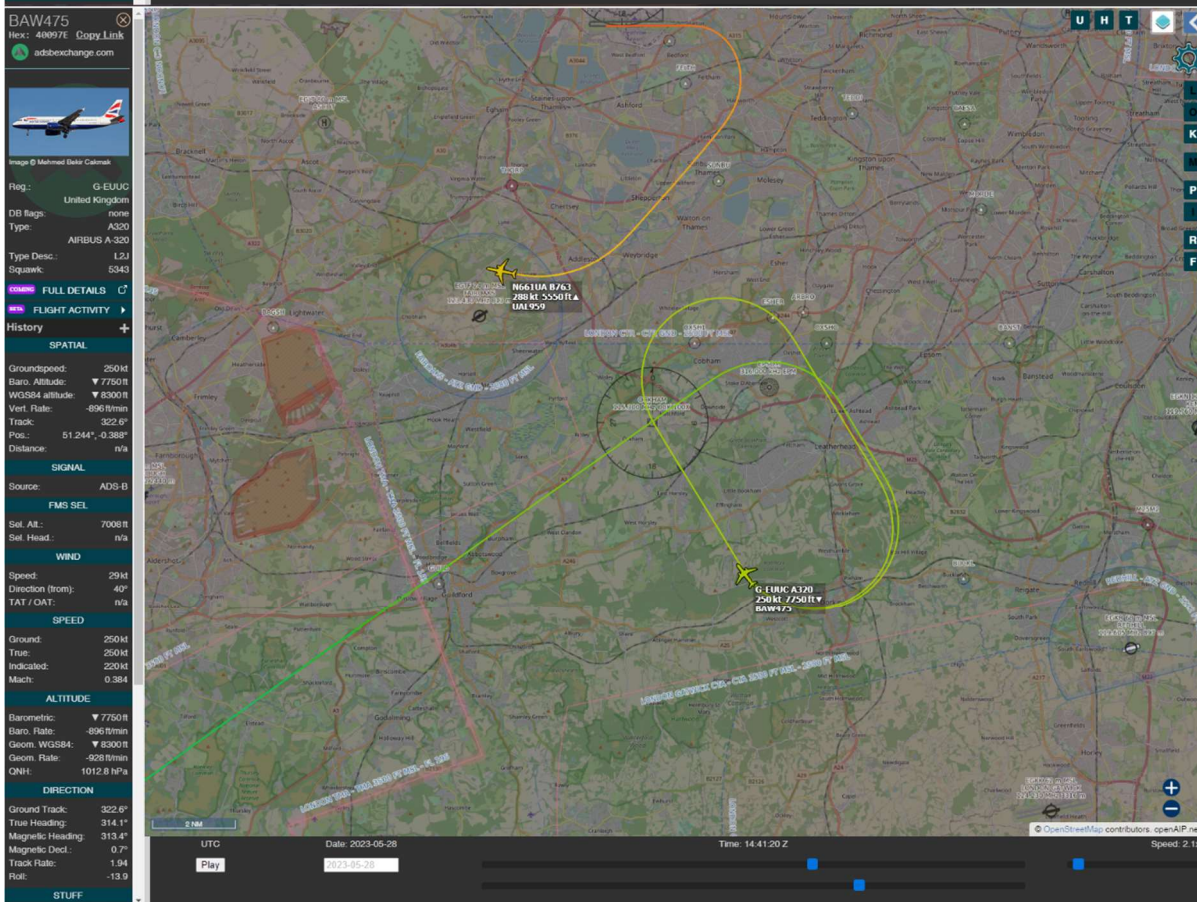
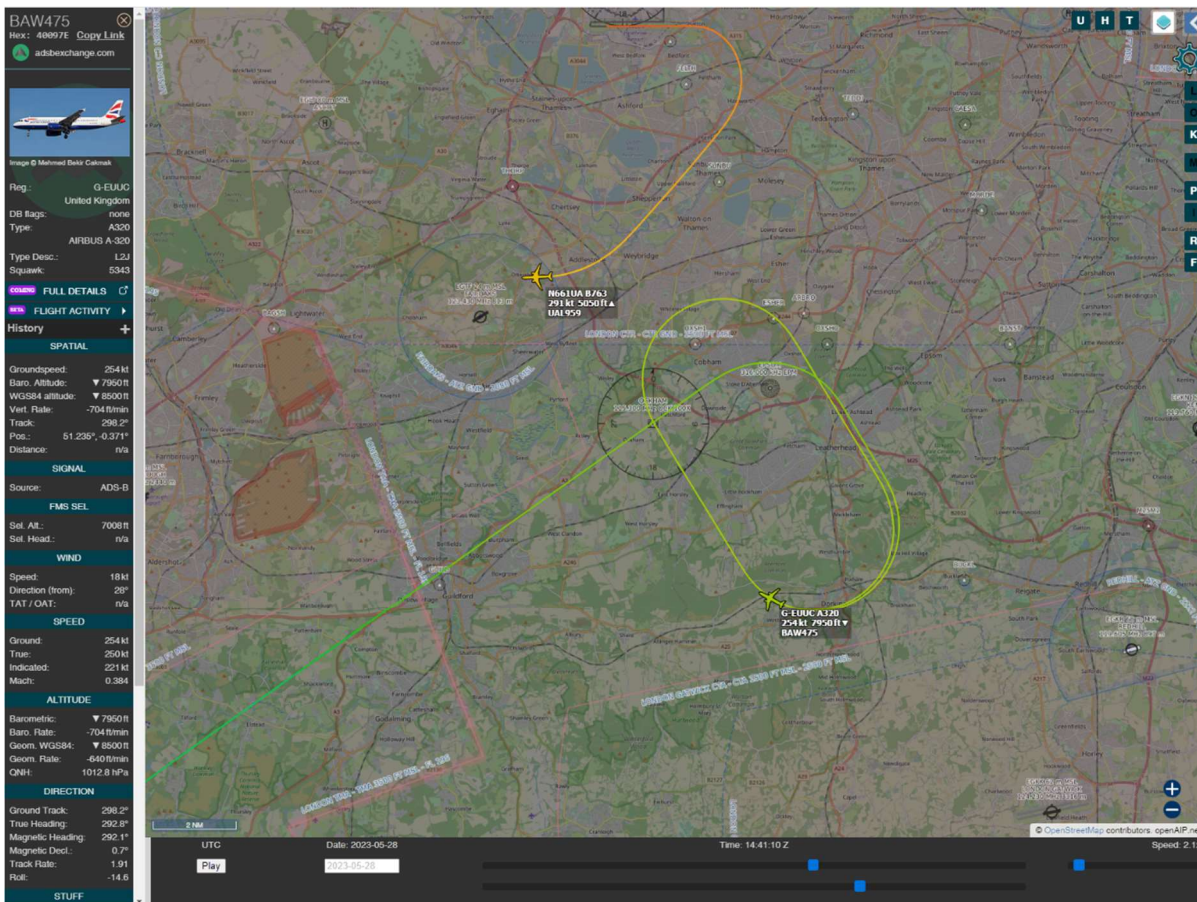
#### **A320 pilot reports Boeing 767 as a drone**

The UKAB have published airprox report 2023137 detailing an event at 14:43hrs on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The pilot of an A320 reported that whilst in the Ockham hold at FL85, a drone flew in the hold. The drone was reported as having been a little bit lower than the reporting aircraft with a separation of 100ft vertical and 100m horizontal, with a high risk of collision. The pilot reported that the drone had a golden fuselage. UKAB have classified this as *'a situation where although safety had been reduced, there had been no risk of collision.'*

Analysis by Airprox Reality Check of ADS-B data reveals that at the time and location reported, the reporting aircraft A320 G-EUUC was turning onto 149<sup>o</sup> travelling at 250knots. whilst Boeing 767 N661UA, travelling at 300knots, was in a climbing right turn about eight miles in front, and 3000 feet below. N661UA has golden coloured lower surfaces, which would have been visible to G-EUUC. At that distance the Boeing 767 would appear about the size of a nearby drone.

It is an indisputable fact that the B767 with golden undersurfaces turned 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 8,500ft is infinitesimally small.)

If the pilot's report had stated 'between us and the B767' or 'just after the B767 crossed in front' or something similar then it would be possible to imagine that two 'objects' (a drone with a golden fuselage, and a B767 with a golden fuselage) passed in front of the reporting A320 within seconds of each other. But this is not the case. The reasonable conclusion is that the distant golden B767 was misidentified as being a nearby golden drone, and that there was never any risk of a collision.





JETPHOTOS

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Airprox Reality Check believe 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.