RAF Nimrod XV230 suffered a catastrophic mid-air fire whilst on a routine mission over Helmand Province in Afghanistan on 2 September 2006. This led to the total loss of the aircraft and the death of all 14 service personnel on board. It was the biggest single loss of life of British service personnel in one incident since the Falklands War.

The cause was not enemy fire, but leaking fuel being ignited by an exposed hot cross-feed pipe. It was a pure technical failure. It was an accident waiting to happen. The underlying causes were organisational and managerial.

There are deep lessons to be learned by all organisations from this incident:

• A Failure of Leadership, Culture and Priorities
• Seven Steps to the Loss of Nimrod (over 30 years)
• Seven Themes of Nimrod
• Seven Pillars of Nimrod
• The Four LIPS Principles (Leadership, Independence, People and Simplicity)
• The Four Classic Cultures (Flexible, Just, Learning and Reporting Cultures)
• The Vital Fifth Culture (A Questioning Culture)
• The Importance of Simplicity

“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius—and a lot of courage—to move in the opposite direction.”

E.F. Schumacher

The Beaumont Named Lecture honours Major Kenneth Beaumont CBE, DSO, MA (Oxon) AFRAeS. Major Beaumont was the UK’s most prominent name in air law in his age, after starting as Technical Advisor to Imperial Airways in the mid-1920’s. For many years his firm, Beaumont and Son, was one of the leading aviation practices in the world.