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TRIBUTES to Sir Richard Acland, one of the first great benefactors of land to the nation, who has died in hospital at Exeter, poured in yesterday, Sir Richard, 83, who lived with his wife Lady Anne Acland, a retired architect, at College, Broadclyst, failed to regain consciousness after suffering a stroke on Friday night and passed away on Saturday.

He had spent several weeks in hospital during the summer after suffering heart problems but recovered to return home a few weeks ago to wage a determined campaign against members of the National Trust seeking to stop stag-hunting on Trust property.

In 1944 Sir Richard gave the 16,000 acre Holnicote Estate in West Somerset and the 10,000 acre Merton Estate at Broadclyst near Exeter to the Trust.

The land had been owned by his family for nearly 300 years and they were two of the first large estates to be given to the National Trust.

Sir Richard, a founder member of CND, had a varied political career. He entered Parliament in 1935 as a Liberal for Barnstaple, defeating the Conservative candidate in a straight fight by 454 votes.

He subsequently joined the Labour Party and in 1947 he held the Grave-send seat for the party in a straight fight. The constituency was a marginal one and the victory was regarded as a political triumph at the time.

At the beginning of the war his outspoken criticism of the conduct of the Government and his belief that other means than war could be found to settle differences caused some criticism in his constituency.

One of his leading opponents described him as a "weathercock MP "whose actions and opinions bewildered them.

He gave up his Seat in 1955 in a dramatic gesture against the Government's decision to make the hydrogen bomb and in protest at his own party's endorsement of it.

He was a senior lecturer in history at the former St Luke's teacher training college now a part of Exeter University.

His eldest son, John Acland, 51 , who lives at Sprydun near Broadclyst now becomes the 16th Baronet Acland. He has three children - Dominic 27, Piers 25 and Holly aged 18. Sir Richard leaves two other sons, Robert and Henry, who both live in America.

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