

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF AN ERA

On 16th May 1975 a major change took place in the administration of the Trust. Section 1(5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 dissolved with effect from that date all the existing local authorities in Scotland including Rothesay Town Council and by Section 1(2), 1(3) and 1(4) constituted in their place a new system of District and Regional Councils and three multi-purpose Islands Authorities. Section 154(1) of the Act vested in the new Regional Councils the harbour undertakings of the old Local Authorities. Rothesay Harbour however was not a Local Authority undertaking and did not come within the scope of Section 154. Instead, by virtue of Section 223(4) of the Act, the new Argyll and Bute District Council was authorised to nominate a sufficient number of its members to act in place of the members of Rothesay Town Council. Rothesay Harbour Trust, therefore, remained in being as a separate entity.

On account of the provisions of the Charter of Confirmation of 1584 the Trust was forced into being and on account of the provisions of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 it was forced to remain in being. For the future, however, it would seem only logical that Parliamentary approval should be sought for the transfer of the function of Harbour Trustees from Argyll and Bute District Councillors to Strathclyde Regional Councillors. Although this would still leave the cumbersome administrative machinery of the Trust in existence at least the same Council would then in effect be looking after Rothesay Harbour as is looking after the other Local Authority piers.

The new Trustees, whoever they may eventually be, have an unenviable task. Their inheritance is a capital debt of some £100,000, a mid pier requiring very substantial repairs and a pressing need for a link span. Each problem requires an immediate solution. The Burgh's temporary loan has to be replaced with a more satisfactory form of finance. The mid pier has to have immediate attention before it collapses and blocks off the inner harbour and a link span has to be provided to improve the traffic flow to and from the Island.

The history of the harbour is far from being finished.