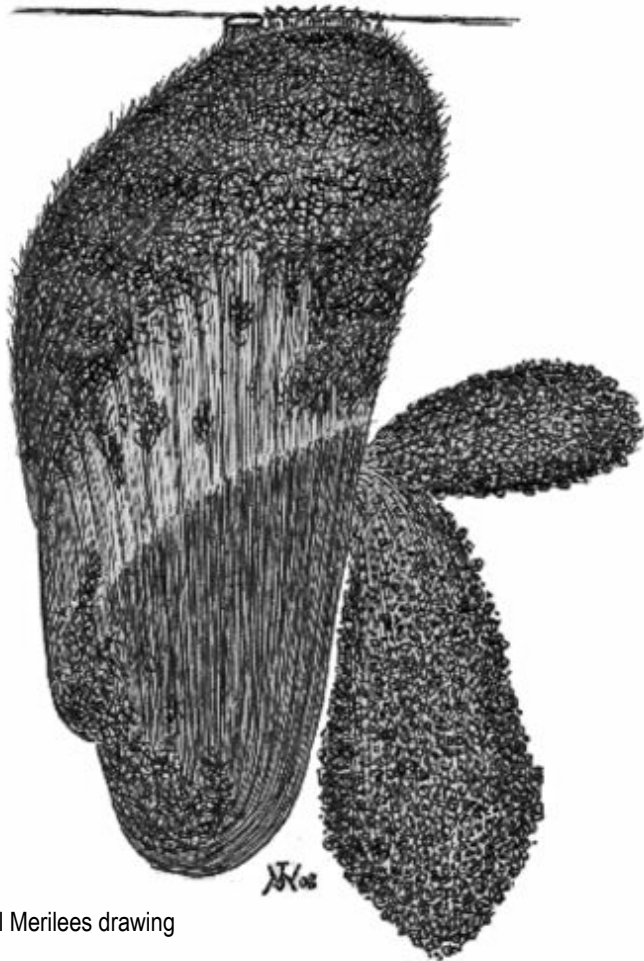


**Modiolus rectus Exposed**  
by George Holm

Among the mussels on our coast, only the California Mussel, *Mytilus californianus* Conrad, 1837 can grow to be larger than the Straight Horsemussel, *Modiolus rectus* (Conrad, 1837), 255mm for *M. californianus* compared to 230mm for *M. rectus*.

Bill Merilees wrote an article about the Straight Horsemussel, **Modiolus rectus, the Mussel with a Mighty Byssus**, *The Dredgings* Vol. 49 No. 2, 2009. He illustrated his article with a drawing of a specimen as it would sit in the sand and how the byssus, containing between 25,000 to 50,000 fine filaments, would have anchored it in place.

A drawing is great when accuracy is needed, but a picture, as it is said, is worth a thousand words. Rick Harbo photographed a Straight Horsemussel that he dug out while diving at Ritchie Bay, Clayoquot Sound, on Vancouver Island. It showed just how massive the byssus is. Rick also managed to photograph the unique white siphon of a buried specimen. This siphon is seldom seen by most beach walkers due to its small size or because the animal has withdrawn it, alerted by vibrations in the sand, as people approach.



Bill Merilees drawing



**Note:** To read Bill Merilees article go to [www.PNWSC.org](http://www.PNWSC.org) and click on **Articles**. The article is under **Bivalves**.