BOX 4

Legend

Age: **Late Pleistocene (The Last Ice Age)**
Map: **Latitude of Mizen Head (same as today)**

Title: **The Model depicts the Type of Conditions existing in this Region during the Glacial Episodes.**

Text: **The Pleistocene was distinguished by the periodic expansion of the Earth's ice caps over a time span of about 1.8million years. About twenty major glaciations have been recognised during this time though only the last two glacial episodes left a record in onshore Ireland. Most of the glacial features, which have been recognised in Ireland, were the product of the last, Midlandian Glaciation, which commenced about 120,000 years ago and ended about 10,000 years ago.**

The main centre of glaciation in southwest Ireland during the Midlandian Glaciation was located well to the north of Mizen Head. The Mizen Head area, being outside this area of major ice accumulation, was an area of erosion and experienced extensive periglacial conditions at least during the Midlandian Glaciation. Such conditions would have included intensive freeze-thaw conditions, which have the effect of disaggregating the top layers of the bedrock resulting in a soil layer containing angular rock fragments. This is generally less than 2m thick in the Mizen area. However, it is not known if this layer of rubbly soil material in the Mizen Head area accumulated during the Pleistocene or the subsequent Holocene.

Sea level during the Pleistocene was up to 140m lower than it is today. Hence, the shallow marine shelf, which surrounds most of Ireland, would have been exposed at this time.

The landscape in the Mizen Peninsula is the result of differential erosion (where one rock weathers away faster than another). But further north there are many examples of a glaciated landscape. In the valley from Bantry to Drimoleague there are drumlins (small regularly shaped hills of gravel that accumulated under the ice sheet). Barley Lake in the mountains above Glengarriff is a good example of a corrie lake (a lake gouged out by debris in the ice).

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