CELTIC PLACE NAME MAP
Celtic map  [found at the beginning of this piece]

the former extent of the Celtic domains is evident from a mapping of the distribution of Celtic place names

Greek      Keltoi      Roman      Galli

Notes:

+ crosses indicate names attested since the Middle Ages
O circles indicate names already attested in Antiquity
• filled circles those only attested in modern times
? indicates the precise location is not known

Celtic / Hallstatt Culture map

Hallstatt culture
these names correlate very, very nicely with the Hallstatt culture, a cultural complex of central and western Europe around the beginning of the 5th century B.C.
— from Austria to northern Spain and Portugal
— patterns of urnfield burial grounds

Linguistic reconstruction and prehistory:
Inferences about people, places, and culture

Assumptions: (undoubtedly valid):

a proto-language was spoken by
a specific people
at a specific place
at a specific time.

Thus, the questions are:
Who? Where? and When?

Some sources of evidence:

• toponyms
• Wörter und Sachen (words and things)
• subgrouping

1. Toponyms
   a. persistence

   Thames and London have persisted for at least two thousand years

   Londinium in Tacitus
   Tamesis in Caesar
b. on the basis of toponyms six layers of names can be established for England

Pre-Celtic
Ancient Celtic
Anglo-Saxon (Old English)
Latin
Scandinavian
Norman French
English

c. the grammar of the names:
new names are constructed according to the grammar of the language spoken there at the time

The majority of the place names in England are analyzable by means of the grammar of Old English.

Anglo-Saxon examples:

Modern English *Sewardstone* in Essex
= genitive OE personal name Sigewead
  + the genitive marker -es
  + the generic term *tūn* ‘enclosed settlement’

that is, Sigewead + -es + *tūn* > Sewardstone

a digression on *tūn*:

*tūn* is the source of Modern English town, cognate with German *Zaun* ‘fence’

cf. Kota Baru in Malaysia and so on
*Toruń* in Poland
*Biskupin* in Poland

Paul Wheatley on Southeast Asia
Raynham

Raynham attested in the Domesday Book (1086)
= genitive of the personal name Regna
+ the generic term hām ‘village’

digression on hām:

hām is the source of Modern English home, cognate with German Heim ‘home’
(and equally common in German place names)

Reading
• attested in 872 in the
dative plural Reading-um
= Old English man’s name Rēad
+ -ing meaning ‘the people of; the followers of’

thus, Rēad-ing

cf. the parallel formation in German

Hechingen
= Hacho, a man’s name
+ -ingen, ‘the followers of the men called (Hach)’
Sigmaringen
  = Sigimar’, a man’s name
  + ingen, ‘the followers of the men called (Sigimar’)’

Tun and ham occur in many other place names:

- with descriptive adjectives:
  Middleton
  Newton
  New(n)ham

Cf. also

Wash-ing-ton
  =Wasa’ personal name
  +ing of the people
  +-tun enclosed settlement

Chill-ing-ham

  = Cheul personal name (< *Ceofel)
  + -ing the people of
  + -ham village

All these names are attributed to the Anglo-Saxons, who arrived in Britain in roughly the middle of the first millennium A.D.

If these names are then plotted on a map, they establish the area occupied by the Anglo-Saxons.

Celtic examples (some with a little Latin):
- Avon, Ouse, Severn, Tees, Trent,
  Thames, Wye, Dee, Esk
- London, Dover, Carlisle, York
(with OE -ceaster ‘fort’ < Latin castra)
  Winchester
  Manchester
  Rochester
  Gloucester
  Dorchester

  Many Celtic examples have, of course, been replaced, but in some instances these are retained in the older written records.

  Canterbury (Modern English)
  < OE Cantwaraburg ‘the town of the people of Kent’
  Note: the formation is OE, but Kent itself is Celtic
  Durovernum (Roman times)

  Colchester (Modern English)

  < OE Colneceaster ‘the fort on the river Colne’

  Camulo-dunum

  -dun-um

  widespread but almost totally replaced in English place names

  the -dun- in dunum is the Celtic equivalent of the Latin dunum, the Greek dunon, and cognate to OE tun, and must have meant something like ‘fortified settlement’

  these occur throughout Europe and are well-attested in the writings of Antiquity, found abundantly in the old Latin and Greek sources

  the ending -dun-um, for instance lasted well into Latin times, as it is found frequently with Latin roots
Autun, the name of several towns in France, goes back to Augusto-dunum, the Roman emperor

Other widespread place name components include:

Celtic -briga ‘hill, fort’
cognate with German burg ‘castle’,
Berg ‘mount’,
Modern English -burgh, -bury

As well as:
-magus ‘field’ only in Antiquity
-lanum ‘plain’ only in Antiquity