



Birmingham Challenge

Our Birmingham challenge is an opportunity to discover, have fun and learn a little more about this exciting city, whether you have lived here all your life or are just visiting.

In January 1889 Birmingham was officially granted City status and has since grown into a diverse, vibrant place with lots to do and see—take on our challenge and find out for yourself.

There are a host of clauses suitable for all sections. You could complete most of the badge during a one day visit, with a follow up session once you return home, or could spread the activities over several meetings or visits ... just have fun!



To complete the challenge you should try at least one activity from each section:

Birmingham,
the arts,
transport,
sport and leisure,
trade and industry,
history,
modern Brum.

There are activities suitable for all ages—choose appropriately challenging ones!

*N.B. Activities in orange are visits
Activities with pink asterisks * have suggestions in the leaders' resource pack*

Birmingham

To see some of what Birmingham has to offer (in just 30 seconds) visit:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcYfjNZw_Q8

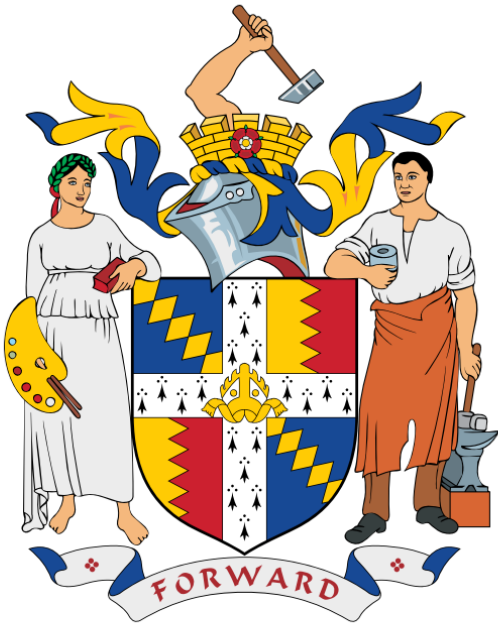
Or if you've an extra minute: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXyHg7qkdVY>

Plan and take a real or virtual tour of Birmingham.

Can you find the coat of arms or flag on your visit?

Can you see anyone wearing a Birmingham County badge?

Use pictures or photos to make a poster, promotional presentation or report of your visit.



Birmingham Coat of Arms and Motto.

The crest is a man's arm holding a hammer, symbolising industry. A mural crown - resembling a city wall - representing local government and the Tudor Rose of Sutton Coldfield are to be found on the Girlguiding County badge and above the shield, which includes elements from several influential families in Birmingham's history.

The supporting figures represent art and industry—the female figure holds a book and an artist's palette, the male figure is dressed as a blacksmith and holds a cupel, a tool used in the manufacture of jewellery.

The Birmingham Community flag has an abstract representation of the letter B, reflecting the name of the city, the colour blue representing Birmingham's importance in the national canal network. This is bordered by a golden zig-zag shape, forming an abstract vertical letter M. This symbolises the Roman letter for 1000 and in turn Birmingham's position as 'the City of a thousand trades', the zig-zag shape also represents closed locks on a canal, positioned next to the colour blue. The overall arrangement of the zig-zag and colours serves to represent the historic arms of the de Birmingham family and current city council. In the centre of the design is a golden bull's head for the Bull Ring Market which stands at the geographic, economic and historic heart of the city.



Girlguiding
Birmingham
County badge



The Arts

Art

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery has one of the world's largest collections of pre-Raphaelite art. Other local galleries include the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at Birmingham University and the New Art Gallery in Walsall featuring the Garman Ryan Collection. Nearby, Wolverhampton Art Gallery contains Victorian, Georgian and contemporary art including pop art.

- a) Create a picture or sculpture. Which museum/gallery would it be most suited to be exhibited in? *
- b) With permission, find a space at your meeting place to create a unit gallery and display your art-work. What would you tell a visitor about your work?
- c) Visit any museum/art gallery and choose your favourite piece of work.
- d) Art isn't always inside, take photos of yourself next to five outdoor works of art.

Music

Birmingham has a successful pop music history. ELO, Moody Blues, Wizzard, UB40, Musical Youth and Duran Duran were all formed in Birmingham. Jeff Lynne, Ozzy Osbourne, Roy Wood, Joan Armatrading, Toyah Wilcox, Steve Winwood, Fyfe Dangerfield and Jamelia grew up in the city.

- a) Make up a dance to one of these musicians' songs.
- b) Perform a song of your choice from one of the above artists.
- c) Take part in a musical concert in Birmingham.
- d) Learn to play a tune on a musical instrument of your choice.
- e) Visit the Conservatoire or Symphony Hall, maybe even listen to a concert.

Theatre

Birmingham is home to many theatres both large and small including Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham Hippodrome, the Old Rep, the Crescent Theatre, the Custard Factory, the Old Joint Stock Theatre, Blue Orange Theatre, the Drum in Aston and the mac in Cannon Hill Park. Birmingham Royal Ballet is based at the Hippodrome Theatre and is one of the top 3 UK ballet companies.

- a) Design and maybe even make a costume to be used in a theatre production. *
- b) Write and perform a short story/scene from a production.
- c) Create some scenery, a backdrop or a prop for a production.
- d) Experiment with face paints/make up to become different characters.
- e) Visit a theatre to watch a play, ballet or pantomime or take a backstage tour.
- f) Learn some basic ballet positions.

Writers & Comedians:

Birmingham authors include Arthur Conan Doyle who wrote Sherlock Holmes stories and J.R.R. Tolkien who wrote Lord of the Rings. Tony Hancock and Jasper Carrot were local comedians.

- a) Play "wink murder" or hold a murder mystery night.
- b) Create your own fantasy world & draw a creature or place from it.
- c) Write and act out a short comedy sketch.
- d) Visit Sarehole Mill/Moseley bog—inspiration for J.R.R. Tolkien's middle-earth.
- e) Have your photo taken by the Tony Hancock memorial in Old Square.



Transport



Birmingham is in the centre of the country and was a centre of industrialisation, so it has many types of transport.

Air

Birmingham has its own airport, Birmingham International.

- Visit Birmingham International airport.** How many planes took off & landed while you were there?
- What destinations do planes from Birmingham fly to? Where would you like to travel to? How long would it take?
- There have been arguments for and against expanding the airport, make a list of those that you can think of. Do you think that the airport should have a second runway, if so why, if not why not?

Canals

Birmingham is said to have more miles of canal than Venice in Italy.

- Girlguiding Birmingham & Northamptonshire own a canal boat called Tuptonia, find out about this and try to visit.
- Take a trip on a waterbus** <http://sherbornewharf.co.uk/boat-trips/waterbus>
- Try your hand at some barge art. *
- Many goods used to be transported to and from Birmingham by canal. Make a model barge. *
- Go for an I-spy walk along a canal towpath.**

For more information go to <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers>

Rail

There are 3 railway stations in the city centre, New Street, Snow Hill and Moor Street. The first railway station was in Curzon Street.

- Travel to Birmingham on the train.** Learn to read a train timetable and departure board.
- Plan a train journey from your nearest railway station to the City Centre. Which stations would you pass through? How much would the journey cost?
- Visit New Street and Moor Street stations** – compare them.

Metro

The metro is a light-rail/tram system which uses streets and reopened disused railway tracks and can take you from Birmingham to Wolverhampton.

- Find out what the Metro looks like and where it stops. Why would it be very difficult to build an underground system in Birmingham?
- Go on a journey on the Metro.**

Bicycle

Motorbikes and bicycles used to be manufactured in Birmingham.

- Investigate the history of bicycles and where some were manufactured.
- Learn to fix a puncture.
- Gain a Bikeability award level 1, 2 or 3.
- Borrow an exercise bike and take turns to see how far your unit can cycle during your weekly meeting.

Motor Traffic

In 1972, Birmingham's Gravelly Hill Interchange (Spaghetti Junction) was opened. It is also known as Junction 6 of the M6 motorway.

Birmingham has two circular bus routes around the City, known as the Inner & Outer circles.

- Travel all around Birmingham on the Outer Circle (No. 11) route.**
- Design an advert for your section to be displayed on a bus.
- Conduct a traffic survey outside your meeting place. How many different modes of transport can you spot?
- Arrange a visit to Safeside** at Eastside or Handsworth. www.safeside.org.uk

Sport and Leisure

Sport

Birmingham offers varied sports opportunities for competitors, team players and spectators and will host the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Over 100 Olympians were born in Birmingham, it is the home of Aston Villa FC, Birmingham City FC, West Bromwich Albion FC, Warwickshire Cricket Club and Birchfield Harriers (Perry Barr) among others.

- a) Attend a live training session/sporting event in Birmingham.
- b) Try a new sport in a unit meeting.
- c) Play a sport for a team (this may be lessons, school or club). Bring a photograph to your meeting place and tell your unit about it.
- d) Invite a local sportsperson to come and talk to you about their sport.
- e) Visit a famous Birmingham sporting venue.
- f) Find out about a Birmingham sportsperson or team.
- g) Create a fitness routine and teach it to others.
- h) Set your own goal and work to improve your skill in a chosen sport.
- i) Hold a sports evening and invent your own races.



Parklands

Birmingham is one of Britain's greenest cities and has over 500 parks including Cannon Hill Park, Handsworth Park, Kings Heath Park, Lickey Hills Country Park, Sutton Park (a Royal Park and national nature reserve), Woodgate Valley Country Park, Moseley Bog, Eastside City Park ... there's bound to be one close to you!

- a) Visit Birmingham Nature Centre at Cannon Hill Park or explore one of the other green spaces in Birmingham.
- b) Visit St Thomas' Peace Garden near Trefoil House. This was created in 1995 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. It was the site of the G8 summit in 1998, where world leaders planted trees that represented their respective countries.
N.B. not open in the evenings.
- c) Design a new play area for your local park, don't forget to make it suitable for all ages!
- d) Make and play a nature bingo game.
- e) Collect natural objects and make a decoration with them.
- f) Build a shelter (either for yourself or an animal).
- g) Make a kite and try to fly it at your local park.



Trade and Industry

Industry

The city was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution, which was set in motion by the Lunar Society of Birmingham - a group of the greatest scientists, inventors and intellectuals of the time. By 1791, Birmingham was being hailed as the first manufacturing town in the world.

After it gained city status in 1889, it was named the City of A Thousand Trades because of the huge range of companies based here. It was also known as the Workshop of The World.

Coins *Birmingham Mint started producing tokens and coins in 1850 and by 1862 it employed 300 staff. At this time it was the largest private mint in the world, producing coins for many countries.*

- a) Collect a selection of British and International coins. Which are your favourite designs? Can you use your collection to play a Kim's or matching game?
- b) Medal hunt—ask your friends and relatives ... who has a medal and what was it for?
- c) Design your own coin or medal and make a model using card, foam and foil.*

Spitfire planes *In 1936, the Air Ministry purchased some land opposite Castle Bromwich Aerodrome. By 1940 the factory produced 60 Spitfires per week. Sentinel is a 16m high sculpture by Tim Tolkien on Spitfire Island, Chester Road to commemorate this.*

- a) Make and decorate a paper plane.
- b) Visit Thinktank at Millennium Point and see the Spitfire gallery.

Custard powder *In 1837 Bird's Custard was first formulated and cooked by Alfred Bird, because his wife was allergic to eggs, the key ingredient used to thicken traditional custard. Bird's custard powder later became famous around the world. The Bird's factory site is now a venue for modern exhibitions.*

- a) Visit the modern Custard Factory.
- b) Invent and/or make a recipe using custard powder.

Chocolate *In 1824 John Cadbury began selling tea, coffee, and drinking chocolate, which he produced himself, at Bull Street. He later moved into the production of cocoa and drinking chocolate. In 1900 Bournville Village Trust was founded by George Cadbury, which led to many improvements in leisure pastimes and standards of living for factory workers across Britain.*

- a) Visit Cadbury World.
- a) Make chocolates/truffles*, chocolate krispies, or a chocolate based drink.

Jewellery *The Birmingham Assay Office is one of the four assay offices in the United Kingdom and is located in Newhall Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham.*

- a) Find out about hallmarks and what the Birmingham one depicts.
- b) Visit the Jewellery Quarter/Museum of the Jewellery Quarter.
<http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/jewellery>
- c) Make your own jewellery.*

Pens *The Birmingham pen trade evolved in the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter and its surrounding area in the 19th century; for many years, the city was the centre of the world's pen trade.*

- a) Visit the Pen Museum. <https://penmuseum.org.uk>
- b) Design a pen and ink pattern or try calligraphy.



HP Sauce *This was inspired by a sauce served in London's Houses of Parliament (HP) and was manufactured in Aston, Birmingham.*

- a) Cook a traditional English breakfast and serve it with HP sauce.
- b) Try a recipe that includes HP sauce, such as sticky barbecued chicken (mix the HP sauce with tomato ketchup and a little honey to give a tasty marinade/sauce).

Cars *Alec Issigonis designed the world famous, Birmingham-made 'Mini', which started production in 1959 at Longbridge, Birmingham and is still in production today. Jaguar cars are assembled in plants at Castle Bromwich and Solihull and used to have a jaguar mascot on the bonnet.*

- a) Design/model a Girlguiding mascot for the front of the Chief Guide's car.



Guns, bicycles and motorcycles

These were made by BSA (Birmingham Small Arms) This is now the site of Ackers Trust.

- a) Take part in an activity at Ackers. <https://www.ackers-adventure.co.uk>

Tyres *Dunlop tyres were one of the first air-filled tyres for cars and planes and were manufactured in Birmingham.*

- a) Find out about ways in which old tyres can be reused or recycled. Which are the most useful/fun/creative ideas?

Finance

The first Building Society, Lloyds and HSBC banks were all founded in Birmingham.

- a) Make a piggy bank.*
- b) Save a regular amount of money each week/month. How long did you save for? How much did you save? What are you going to do with these savings?
- c) Find out how a mortgage works. What sort of home would you buy?
- d) What do you need to open a bank account? Describe some of the different types of bank accounts available.

Markets and shopping

Peter de Birmingham bought a Royal Charter for Birmingham's first weekly market in 1166.

With 5 department stores, 3 shopping centres and over 1,000 shops in the modern city centre, there's plenty to look at!

- a) Visit one of the Birmingham markets (Bullring, Indoor, Rag, German Christmas etc.).
- b) Visit a shopping centre, a department store and an arcade—which do you prefer and why?
- c) Choose an unusual food item that you've seen, then find out how to prepare and cook it.
- d) Run your own stall at an event or at a unit meeting.



History and Famous People

Back to Backs *The last surviving court of back-to-back houses in Birmingham have been preserved as examples of the thousands of similar houses that were built around shared courtyards. These closely packed houses were home to generations of lower income Birmingham inhabitants.*

- a) **Arrange to visit the back-to-back houses preserved by the National Trust.**
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birmingham-back-to-backs
- b) Play a traditional game that may have been familiar to the children living here, such as hopscotch, jacks, skipping or marbles
- c) Make a doll or toy from recycled materials. *



John Baskerville *was a Birmingham printer & font designer.*

- a) **Go to see the sculpture of the typeface** outside Baskerville House, Centenary Square.
What do you notice about the letters?
- b) Design a poster or information leaflet—which font(s) are easiest to read?
- c) Collect some printed information and try to identify the fonts used.
- d) Try your hand at potato printing.
- e) Make your own print block or use rubber stamps to make some unit thank you cards.

Matthew Boulton, James Watt and William Murdoch *These three men were pioneers of the Industrial Revolution in late 18th century England and formed the famous Lunar Society. James Watt's improvements to the steam engine and William Murdoch's invention of gas lighting have made them famous throughout the world. With Matthew Boulton, entrepreneur and industrialist, their company made everything from tableware and copper coins to steam engines. Boulton's home, Soho House, is now a museum. All three men are buried in St Mary's Church, Handsworth, and their statue nicknamed 'The Golden Boys' or 'The Carpet Salesmen' usually stands on Broad Street and shows the three men discussing engine plans.*

- a) **Visit Soho House Museum.**
- b) **Have your photo taken beside the statue.**
- c) Invent your own machine.

Politics *Joseph Chamberlain made his career in Birmingham, first as a manufacturer of screws and then as a notable Mayor of the city. He entered the House of Commons at the age of thirty-nine. The Joseph Chamberlain Memorial Clock Tower known as Old Joe, is a clock tower located on the University of Birmingham's campus. Chamberlain was the father of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.*

- a) Learn to use a screwdriver and screw—could you use this skill to make something useful?
- b) Discuss how would you promote Birmingham if you were Lord Mayor.
- c) **Visit The University of Birmingham in Edgbaston** and see if you can find the commemoration carved into the stone at the clock tower's base.
- d) Hold a mock election or referendum vote, complete with ballot paper and ballot box.

Tea *In 1830 Thomas Ridgway began selling tea in the Bull Ring, and a few years later William Sumner (founder of Typhoo) started a business in Birmingham.*

- a) Learn how to make tea.
- b) Hold a tea tasting evening or a Mad Hatter's Tea Party.
- c) Serve tea at an event.
- d) Make a tea-stained treasure map or 'ancient' parchment scroll.



The Coffin Works *This is located on the edge of the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham. The grade II listed factory and its contents tell the story of Newman Brothers, Birmingham's last coffin-furniture makers who operated for over 100 years until 1998 when workers laid down their equipment, and walked out of the building for the very last time, leaving everything, including personal belongings behind.*

- a) Visit the Coffin Works. <http://www.coffinworks.org>

Aston Hall *This was one of the last great Jacobean houses to be built.*

Blakesley Hall *This is one of the oldest buildings in Birmingham and is a typical example of Tudor architecture.*

Sarehole Mill *This was the childhood haunt of JRR Tolkien*

- a) Visit one of these historic buildings.
b) Make a model water wheel.
c) Try a recipe or activity from these periods.

John Barnes Linnett *was a printer from Birmingham who patented the world's first flip book in 1868.*

- a) Make your own flip book or thaumatrope.

Cinema *The Odeon Cinema was founded by Birmingham man Oscar Deutsch and the first Art Deco cinema opened in Perry Barr. The Odeon cinema chain later became the largest in Europe. Alexander Parkes, a Birmingham inventor created the first man made plastic, celluloid, often used in movie film*

- a) Visit a cinema or watch a short film.
b) Create your own short film or animation.

Brylcreem *This was invented in the city, made famous by the Teddy Boys and later gave rise to other hair-styling products.*

- a) Hold a creative hair evening.

Games *Birmingham-based Chad Valley were the biggest toy makers in England and were appointed toy makers to the Queen. Brummie Anthony Ernest Pratt designed a board game named 'Murder' which became the world-renowned murder mystery game 'Cluedo'.*

- a) Hold a board games evening.
b) Make a toy or game.
c) Hold a teddy bears picnic.

Medicine *Birmingham is a centre of clinical excellence with many specialist hospitals, and is the home of many lifesaving procedures.*

In the 1800s Dr. Joseph Sampson Gamgee invented Gamgee Tissue, which is still the basis for many modern surgical dressings, and Major John Hall Edwards took the first x-ray for medical purposes in Birmingham. In 1950 the first operation in England for 'hole-in-the-heart' was performed at Birmingham Children's Hospital and in 1960 Professor Peter Medawar was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine for his research on skin graft rejection at Birmingham University.

- a) Learn some basic First Aid.
b) Create a 'body' map of organs and bones drawn onto a life-sized outline (draw around one of your unit members).
c) Take part in a fundraising event for a medical charity.

Inspirational women

Once Upon A Time In Birmingham: Women Who Dared To Dream was commissioned by Birmingham City Council in 2018 to mark the centenary of the first women being given the right to vote. It celebrates the achievements of 30 inspiring women from the city and is especially appropriate those aged 11 – 16. Featuring structural engineers, founders of life-saving charities, ground-breaking cancer researchers and much, much more, the book aims to inspire the city's next generation of female achievers, leaders and pioneers.

- a) find out about one of these women.



Modern Brum

Balti Triangle *This is an area of Birmingham well-known for its “Baltis”.*

- a) Taste a balti curry and naan.
- b) Try kulfi (Indian ice cream) or a selection of sweets from an ethnic sweet centre.
- c) Make lassi (yogurt based drink)*.



Chinese Quarter *Chinatown is located just five minutes' walk from New Street station and is adjacent to the Bullring. Local landmarks include a stone pagoda, donated by a prominent local Chinese business and it is home to a diverse range of businesses including restaurants, cafes, bars and bakeries.*

- a) Explore this area of Birmingham .
- b) Try eating with chopsticks.
- c) Make a stir-fry or other Chinese inspired dish.
- d) Discover your future from a fortune cookie.



Rotunda (refurbished), Selfridges, Grand Central Station *Birmingham has several buildings considered to be 'iconic'.*

- a) Visit and photograph some of these buildings—what do you like best about them?
- b) Find out what 'iconic' means and design or model a new iconic Birmingham building.

National Exhibition Centre, International Convention Centre, Symphony Hall and Arena Birmingham

These Birmingham venues host concerts, sports events, exhibitions and conferences.

- a) Visit one of these.
- b) Plan a Girlguiding exhibition. What would you promote? How would you advertise it?
- c) Agree an ideal Big Gig line up.

Central Library *The new modern library is the largest in Europe.*

- a) Visit, making sure you see the Shakespeare room and the secret garden for a view over the city. What happens below ground?
- b) Attend a story telling session or special event.
- c) Write a story or poem —could you publish a unit anthology?

Trefoil House *This is the Girlguiding Birmingham HQ.*



- a) Visit Trefoil House, maybe for a sleepover or activity day or to buy badges or uniform from the shop.
(check opening times on the Girlguiding Birmingham website)

https://girlguidingbirmingham.org.uk/?page_id=6676

Mailbox – This used to be the postal sorting office. When it was completed in 1970, it was the largest mechanised letters and parcels sorting office in the country and the largest building in Birmingham. A tunnel was constructed between the site and New Street railway station allowing sacks of mail to be driven directly to the office. Now it is a shopping development and home to BBC Birmingham.

- Find out where the sorting office has moved to & design a new Birmingham stamp or postmark.
- Visit the **BBC Public Space**, upstairs in the Mailbox, take a photo with a dalek, tour behind the scenes, watch TV and radio programmes broadcast live and even try your hand at presenting.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/tours/birmingham>



Religious buildings

Birmingham is home to a diverse population who worship in many different types of buildings and ways. It has large Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist communities.

- Visit 2 different religious buildings .
- Find out about a religion different to your own.
- Celebrate a religious festival.



Thinktank Science Museum

- Visit the museum. <http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank>
- Have fun in the outdoor science garden
(the Science Garden is free every day from 3pm, with varying closing times in winter).
- Hold a science evening or invite a scientist to your meeting.
- Try star-gazing.

Broad Street Walk of Stars

This is a walk of fame-style installation on the pavements of Broad Street, which honours notable Birmingham people. The criteria for nomination is that the living star(s) must have made a recognisable impact in their specialist category and performed at one of Birmingham's major venues, be originally from the area or have prominent links with Birmingham and the Midlands.

- Walk down Broad Street and see how many stars you can spot.
- Find out about one of the featured stars.
- Create a walk of stars featuring everyone in your unit - you won't all be performers, but will all have unique star qualities to celebrate.

Birmingham's Vibrant and Diverse Community

Birmingham has always been proud of its wonderfully diverse communities and the many cultures that have contributed to a vibrant city. Birmingham is home to people originally from around almost 200 countries.

- Try a food, craft or activity from another country.
- Learn a dance or musical instrument from another culture—find someone to teach you Bhangra dancing, steel pan or Indian drumming, Irish dancing etc.
- Celebrate an event from another culture such as Chinese New Year, St Patrick's day, Mardi Gras.
- Take part in one of the city's celebration events. <https://visitbirmingham.com/>





Birmingham Challenge Badge Order Form



We hope that you have enjoyed exploring Birmingham!

Number of Badges Required (£1 each)

Total

(including postage)

£

Postage Costs:

1-20 badges = £1.00; 21-41 badges = £2.00; 41-50 badges = £2.50; 51+ = £3.00

Unit : _____

County : _____

Name and Address:

Phone number (optional, just for quick queries):

Please make cheques payable to **Birmingham Guide Shop**.

Queries and feedback to ginnyadams139@gmail.com

Send orders (Marked "Birmingham Challenge Badges") to:

Girlguiding Birmingham, Trefoil House, 2, Ellis Street, Birmingham B1 1HL

RECEIPT (for us to complete and return to you)

Birmingham Challenge Badges

Unit: _____

Amount: £ _____ Signed _____

