# Dual Copper- and Photoredox-Catalysed C(sp<sup>2</sup>)-C(sp<sup>3</sup>) Coupling

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# SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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#### **Supporting Information**

# **General Considerations**

<sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AV300 or AV400 spectrometer at 300 MHz or 400 MHz respectively and referenced to residual solvent. <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded using the same spectrometers at 75 MHz or 101 MHz respectively. Chemical shifts ( $\delta$  in ppm) were referenced to tetramethylsilane (TMS) or to residual solvent peaks (CDCl<sub>3</sub> at  $\delta_H$  7.26 ppm and  $\delta_C$  at 77.0 ppm). <sup>19</sup>F NMR were recorded using the same spectrometers at 282 MHz or 376 MHz respectively. *J* values are given in Hz and s, d, t, q, dd, ddd and m are abbreviations corresponding to singlet, doublet, triplet, quartet, doublet of doublets, doublet of doublets of doublets and multiplet respectively. Mass spectra were obtained at the EPSRC UK National Mass Spectrometry Facility at Swansea University. Infrared spectra were obtained on Perkin-Elmer Spectrum 100 FT-IR Universal ATR Sampling Accessory, deposited neat or as a chloroform solution to a diamond/ZnSe plate.

Column chromatography was carried out using Matrix silica gel 60 from Fluorochem and TLC performed using Merck silica gel 60 F<sub>254</sub> pre-coated sheets and visualised by UV (254 nm) and/or aqueous acidic KMnO<sub>4</sub>. Anhydrous solvents were obtained from a MBRAUN SPS-800 solvent purification system (SPS) and stored under an argon atmosphere until use. Arylboronic acids were bought from Sigma-Aldrich or Fluorochem and recrystallized from water prior to use unless otherwise stated. Arylboroxines were obtained by dehydrating boronic acids by heating the corresponding boronic acid under vacuum. Benzyl bromides other than those whose syntheses are detailed here were obtained from a number of commercial sources and were used without further purification. Unless otherwise stated, photoredox reactions were carried out under argon atmosphere. The reaction mixture was sparged with argon for 5 min before use. Light irradiation was performed using blue LEDs (1.5 Watt/foot). The light source was placed ca 10 cm away from the reaction vessel, to prevent excess heating. We found that the reactions are most reproducible when only one reaction vessel is irradiated per setup, to allow maximum light penetration.

# **Selected Optimisation Tables**

Unless otherwise stated, the reaction mixture was sparged with argon for 5 min before the reaction commenced and reactions were carried out in oven dried 1 dram screw cap vials. *p*-tolylboronic acid was recrystallized from water unless otherwise stated.

# **Initial Screens**

### **Solvent Optimisation**

Br						
	4a	K <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub> (1 equ	iv.)			
3 e	quiv.	Cul (20 mol%	6)	$\land \land \land$	O <sub>2</sub> N	
	+	$Ru(bpy)_3(PF_6)_2$ (2.5)	<sup>5</sup> mol%) 🔪 🗍			
^	B(OH)	Solvent, 50 °C,	16 h		`NO <sub>2</sub>	$\sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{i$
		Blue LEDs		5aa	- 7a	NO <sub>2</sub>
1 €	<b>1a</b> equiv.					
	Entry	Solvent	<b>5aa</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>4a</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>7a (%)</b> <sup>a,b</sup>	
	1	DCM	Trace	N/A <sup>f</sup>	25	
	2	THF	8	$N/A^{f}$	31	
	3	Toluene	23	N/A <sup>f</sup>	17	
	4	DMF	8	N/A <sup>f</sup>	41	
	5 <sup>c</sup>	MeCN	10	N/A <sup>f</sup>	24	
	6 <sup>d,e</sup>	NMP	Trace	Trace	23	
	7 <sup>d,e</sup>	DMSO	8%	5%	26	
	8 <sup>e</sup>	Toluene	29	28	20	

Reaction carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise).<sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. <sup>c</sup>Reaction carried out at r.t. <sup>d</sup>30 mol% Cul, 1 mol% Ru(bpy)<sub>3</sub>(PF<sub>6</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, 4 equiv. KF. <sup>e</sup>Stoichiometry of benzyl bromide and boronic acid reversed. <sup>f</sup>Not applicable as **4a** is in excess.

Solvent screen showed toluene to be by far the best solvent.

#### **Base Optimisation**

p-Tolylboronic a Br Cul (30) $Ru(bpy)_3(PF_{e})$ 4a Toluene, 5 Blue			d <b>1a</b> (3 equiv.) nol%) (2.5 mol%) °C, 16 h EDs	7a		
	Entry	Base	Equiv.	<b>5aa</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>4a</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>7a</b> (%) <sup>a,b</sup>
	1	-	-	0	100	0
	2	$K_2CO_3$	3	29	28	20
	3	KOtBu	3	19	24	16
	4	DMAP	3	0	0	0
	5	LiF	3	0	100	0
	6	NaF	3	0	95	0
	7	NH <sub>4</sub> F	3	0	45	26
	8	CsF	3	35	30	18
	9	KF	3	37	13	22
	10	KF	1	17	54	14
	11	KF	6	45	0	28

Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**.

Base screen identified KF to be the best base.

The increase in yield of **5aa** when moving from LiF (0%) and NaF (0%) to CsF (35%) to KF (45%) indicates that ion pairing plays a role, with the tighter LiF/KF pairs showing no reactivity while the less tightly bound CsF and KF progressively show more reactivity.

#### Other parameters

EntryParameter5aa (%)a4a (%)a7a (%)a.b1Control37132221 mol% Ru4072635 mol% Ru31112041 equiv. KF17541456 equiv. KF4502865 equiv. of 1443307Half concentration3624208Half concentration330249Double concentration3503010100 °C instead of 50 °C201916111 equiv. CuI35018	Br 4a	<i>p</i> -Tolylborc K Ci Ru(bpy) NO <sub>2</sub> Tolue	onic acid <b>1a</b> (3 equiv.) (F (3 equiv.) ul (30 mol%) <sub>3</sub> (PF <sub>6</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> (2.5 mol%) ene, 50 °C, 16 h Blue LEDs	O <sub>2</sub> N. NO <sub>2</sub> 5aa		7a	
1       Control       37       13       22         2       1 mol% Ru       40       7       26         3       5 mol% Ru       31       11       20         4       1 equiv. KF       17       54       14         5       6 equiv. KF       45       0       28         6       5 equiv. of 1       44       3       30         7       Half concentration       36       24       20         8       Half concentration       33       0       24         9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		Entry	Parameter	<b>5aa</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>4a</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>7a</b> (%) <sup>a,b</sup>	
2       1 mol% Ru       40       7       26         3       5 mol% Ru       31       11       20         4       1 equiv. KF       17       54       14         5       6 equiv. KF       45       0       28         6       5 equiv. of 1       44       3       30         7       Half concentration       36       24       20         8       Half concentration       33       0       24         9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		1	Control	37	13	22	
3       5 mol% Ru       31       11       20         4       1 equiv. KF       17       54       14         5       6 equiv. KF       45       0       28         6       5 equiv. of 1       44       3       30         7       Half concentration       36       24       20         8       Half concentration       33       0       24         9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		2	1 mol% Ru	40	7	26	
4       1 equiv. KF       17       54       14         5       6 equiv. KF       45       0       28         6       5 equiv. of 1       44       3       30         7       Half concentration       36       24       20         8       Half concentration       33       0       24         9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		3	5 mol% Ru	31	11	20	
5       6 equiv. KF       45       0       28         6       5 equiv. of 1       44       3       30         7       Half concentration       36       24       20         8       Half concentration       33       0       24         9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		4	1 equiv. KF	17	54	14	
65 equiv. of 1443307Half concentration3624208Half concentration330249Double concentration3503010100 °C instead of 50 °C201916111 equiv. CuI35018		5	6 equiv. KF	45	0	28	
7       Half concentration       36       24       20         8       Half concentration       33       0       24         9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		6	5 equiv. of <b>1</b>	44	3	30	
8       Half concentration       33       0       24         9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		7	Half concentration	36	24	20	
9       Double concentration       35       0       30         10       100 °C instead of 50 °C       20       19       16         11       1 equiv. CuI       35       0       18		8	Half concentration	33	0	24	
10100 °C instead of 50 °C201916111 equiv. CuI35018		9	Double concentration	35	0	30	
11 1 equiv. CuI 35 0 18		10	100 °C instead of 50 °C	20	19	16	
		11	1 equiv. CuI	35	0	18	

Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**.

From these screens it was shown that the photocatalyst loading could be lowered to 1 mol% without any detriment to the reaction performance (entry 2).

### **Copper Catalyst Optimisation**



Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. <sup>c</sup>4 equivalents of KF used. <sup>d</sup>Ru(bpy)<sub>3</sub>(PF<sub>6</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (1 mol%)

Cu<sub>2</sub>O was identified as the best copper source.

#### **Miscellaneous tests**

Br 4a	p-Tolylbo C Ru(bj `NO₂ Tol	oronic acid <b>1a</b> (3 equiv.) KF (4 equiv.) Cu <sub>2</sub> O (30 mol%) oy) <sub>3</sub> (PF <sub>6</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> (1 mol%) uene, 50 °C, 16 h Blue LEDs	5aa	O <sub>2</sub> N NO <sub>2</sub>	<b>7</b> a	NO
	Entry	Parameter	<b>5aa</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>4a</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>	<b>7a</b> (%) <sup>a,b</sup>	
	1	Control	55	0	20	
	2	r.t. instead of 50 °C	16	64	8	
	3	CFL instead of LEDs	46	18	16	
	4	Schlenk Conditions	40	0	16	
	5	AgF instead of KF	31	0	0	
	6	Portion wise Cu	50	0	18	
	7*	O <sub>2</sub> Atmosphere	0	17	0	
	8	KF and AgF	0	0	0	

Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. CFL= compact fluorescent lamp.

\*Oxygen atmosphere reaction results in a large amount of aldehyde product deriving from oxidation of benzylic radical:

Ó SI-1 NO<sub>2</sub>

Main product under O<sub>2</sub> atm.

Up until this point, all optimisation had been carried out on recrystalised *p*-tolyboronic acid **1** as a model substrate. To our surprise, when the optimised reaction conditions for **1** (Entry 1, above) were applied to other arylboronic acids, either no coupling or low yields were obtained. We hypothesized that this difference in reactivity may be due to the different position of equilibrium between arylboronic acids and their corresponding arylboroxine for each arylboronic acid. This potentially leads to different reactivity as the arylboroxine is thought to be less efficient as a coupling partner. The reaction conditions would therefore need to be reoptimised in order to find a set of *general* conditions which would work for all arylboronic acids. We started by adding a known quantity of water to our reaction mixture in order to perturb the equilibrium towards the desired arylboronic acid.



#### Water Content Optimisation<sup>a</sup>

B(OH) <sub>2</sub> 3 equiv. 1d	<i>p</i> -NO₂BnE KF ( Cu₂O Ru(bpy)₃(l <u>H₂O</u> Toluene Blu	Br <b>4a</b> (1 equiv.) (4 equiv.) (15 mol%) PF <sub>6</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> (1 mol%) <b>(x equiv.)</b> e, 50 °C, 16 h ie LEDs	$\rightarrow \qquad \qquad$				
	Entry	Equiv.	<b>5da</b> (%) <sup>b</sup>	<b>4a</b> (%) <sup>b</sup>	<b>7a</b> (%) <sup>b,c</sup>		
	1	0	8	89	4		
	2	3	3	92	0		
	3	6	11	77	6		
	4	9	15	69	6		
	5 <sup>d</sup>	3	0	95	0		
	6 <sup>d</sup>	6	3	68	1		
	$7^{d}$	9	8	81	2		
	8	15	42	6	20		
	9	20	38	33	16		
	10	25	51	9	24		
	11	30	53	3	28		
	12	40	45	9	22		
	13	55	48	14	22		
	14	60	44	12	20		
	15	70	42	14	16		

<sup>a</sup>Phenylboronic acid **1d** was used straight from the bottle without prior recrystallization unless otherwise stated. Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>b</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>c</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. <sup>d</sup>Arylboroxine (dehydrated from phenylboronic acid) used instead of arylboronic acid from bottle.

The addition of 30 equiv. of water was deemed to be optimal in order to gain consistent yields for a variety of arylboronic acids. The conditions in Entry 11 were therefore taken forward for further screening.

### **Temperature Screen**



Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**.

#### **Photocatalyst Screening**



Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. <sup>c</sup>Cu<sub>2</sub>O (30 mol%) Fukuzumi's Catalyst: 9-mesitylene-10-methylacridinium perchlorate.

 $Ru(bpy)_3(PF_6)_2$  is the best photocatalyst for the reaction of the examples screened. Organic dyes such as Eosin Y and Fluorescein can also catalyse the reaction, but are far less efficient.

# Testing more reducing catalyst for more electron-rich benzyl bromides:

The reaction using more electron-rich benzyl bromides (**4k**) was also attempted using the more reducing *fac*-Ir(ppy)<sub>3</sub> photocatalyst. However this resulted in only trace amounts of the desired product being detected by <sup>1</sup>H NMR with large amounts of homocoupled benzyl bromide product **7k** being detected (50%) and 11% of the benzyl bromide **4k** starting material being recovered. Therefore, this result indicates that although the benzyl radical is forming from **4k** with the more reducing photocatalyst, homocoupling predominates over the cross-coupling reaction.



In an attempt to improve the yields of product **5** and reduce reaction times, the reaction was carried out in the presence of a substoichiometric amount of 4-methoxypyridine which has been previously shown in the literature to activate benzyl bromides towards single electron reduction.<sup>1</sup>

However, under our reaction conditions, the addition of 4-methoxypyridine resulted in a reduction in the yield of **5ak** (14% vs. 42%) but with comparable amounts of remaining starting material **4d** and homocoupling product **7k** being observed when compared with the reaction without additive. Therefore, we hypothesise that this is caused by the 4-methoxypyridine coordinating to the copper catalyst and inhibiting the cross-coupling reaction.

Similarly, we also observe that no appreciable amount of cross-coupling product **5** is detected when a pyridyl moiety is present in either substrate **1** or **4**, indicating that this type of motif is incompatible with our reaction conditions.



In both cases only traces of the desired products were observed and only traces of homocoupling product and left over starting material were detected.

### **Stoichiometry Optimisation**



Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. <sup>c</sup>Not applicable as **4a** in excess.

# **Control Reactions**



Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using mesitylene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. <sup>c</sup>No water, 20 mol% Cu<sub>2</sub>O.

\*Carrying out the reaction under air results 15% aldehyde **SI-1** formation.

These control reactions confirm that both the photoredox and copper catalysts are required for the coupling reaction to proceed efficiently (Entries 2-3). Base (KF, Entry 3) and light (Entry 4) are also necessary.

#### **Miscellaneous Optimisation**



Reactions carried out on a 0.1 mmol scale (0.1 M unless stated otherwise). <sup>a</sup>Yield determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis using 1,3,5-trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard. <sup>b</sup>Yields with respect to theoretical maximum formation of **7a**. <sup>c</sup>Isolated yield.

It was found that when the relative strength of the electron withdrawing effect from the benzyl bromide substituents was decreased, the reaction required extended reaction times to reach completion. It was also observed that in addition to increasing the yields of the reaction, increasing the copper loading from 15 to 30 mol% made the results of each reaction much more reproducible.

# **Mechanistic Investigations**

# **Radical Trap Experiment**



A oven-dried one dram vial was charged sequentially with 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol), 4-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol), KF (23.2 mg, 0.4 mmol), TEMPO (31.3 mg, 0.2 mmol), Ru(bpy)<sub>3</sub>(PF<sub>6</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (0.9 mg, 0.001 mmol) and Cu<sub>2</sub>O (4.3 mg, 0.03 mmol) under an argon atmosphere. H<sub>2</sub>O (54 mg, 54 µL, 3 mmol) was then added before all reagents were dissolved in anhydrous toluene (1 mL). The resulting solution was then sparged with an argon balloon for 5 minutes, before the vial was sealed and the resulting solution stirred at 50 °C under blue LED irradiation for 16 h. The reaction was then diluted with EtOAc (10 mL) and H<sub>2</sub>O (10 mL). The organic and aqueous layers were then separated before the aqueous layer was extracted with EtOAc (3x10 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with saturated Na<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> solution (10 mL) followed by brine (10 mL). They were then dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated *in vacuo* to yield the crude product. Purification of the crude product by silica gel flash chromatography (49:1 to 19:1 petrol 40-60 °C: EtOAc, R<sub>f</sub> = 0.30) followed by Kugelrohr distillation provided TEMPO-trapped adduct **8**<sup>2</sup> as a yellow solid (18.7 mg, 0.064 mmol, 64%).

**R**<sub>f</sub> ; **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3006 (C-H Ar), 2975 (C-H), 2931 (C-H), 1605 (C-C Ar), 1521 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1470 (C-C Ar), 1451 (C-C Ar), 1345 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.20 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.93 (s, 2H, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 1.68 – 1.31 (m, 6H, 3xCH<sub>2</sub>), 1.21 (s, 6H, 2xCH<sub>3</sub>), 1.17 (s, 6H, 2xCH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  147.2 (C), 146.1 (C), 127.5 (CH), 123.7 (CH), 77.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 60.3 (C), 39.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 33.1 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 20.4 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 17.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>); **m.p.** = 61-62 °C (lit.<sup>2</sup> 60-62 °C).

No formation of coupling product **5aa** was detected in the presence of TEMPO. Isolation of the TEMPO trapped adduct of the benzylic radical originating from reduction of the benzyl bromide would suggest that the mechanism of the reaction is radical based with benzylic radicals serving as intermediates.

#### **Quantum Yield Determination**

The following model reaction was used in order to determine the quantum yield of the reaction (following the method used by Nicewicz and co-workers.)<sup>3</sup>



In the dark, potasium ferrioxalate trihydrate ( $K_2Fe(C_2O_4)_3$ ) was prepared by adapting a previously reported literature procedure and was purified by recrystallization from water prior to use.<sup>4</sup> A 0.15 M aqueous solution of  $K_2Fe(C_2O_4)_3$  was made up before 1 mL of the solution was irradiated under our standard reaction set up (Figure S1) for 30 seconds (a second measurement was also carried out irradiating for 15 seconds). After irradiation, the samples were kept in the dark as much as possible. After being irradiated for the appropriate amount of time, 0.5 mL of each sample was transferred to a 25 mL volumetric flask. To this 5 mL of a buffered 1,10-phenanthroline solution, previously prepared in accordance with the literature,<sup>5</sup> was added and the flask made up to the mark with H<sub>2</sub>O. The resulting solution was then stirred at room temperature for 30 minutes. 0.25 mL of the solution was then transferred to a cuvette and diluted to 2.75 mL with H<sub>2</sub>O.

The moles of tris-phenanthroline-Fe<sup>2+</sup> complex ( $\epsilon_{510 \text{ nm}}$ = 11110 M<sup>-1</sup>cm<sup>-1</sup>)<sup>6</sup> was then determined using UV/vis spectroscopy. The photon flux on the system was determined using the absolute quantum yield of 0.85 at 457.9 nm for the photodecomposition of K<sub>2</sub>Fe(C<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>)<sub>3</sub>. The photon flux averaged over the two experiments was determined to be 1.69×10<sup>-7</sup> mol photons s<sup>-1</sup> (std. dev. 4.60×10<sup>-8</sup> mol photons s<sup>-1</sup>). The quantum yield of the reaction was then obtained by stopping the reaction at varying degrees of conversion, using the following relationship,

$$\Phi_R = \frac{moles \ of \ product}{moles \ of \ incident \ photons}$$

Three measurements were taken at 29%, 57% and 61% conversion. The average quantum yield of the reaction was  $\varphi$  = 0.012 (std. dev. 0.0023).

(Sample calculation from 61% converted experiment, reaction time 8 h)

NMR yield = 47%

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{moles \ of \ product}{moles \ of \ incident \ photons}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{moles \ of \ product}{Photon \ flux \ \times \ reaction \ time}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{4.7 \times 10^{-5} \ mol}{1.69 \times 10^{-7} \ mols^{-1} \ \times 28800 \ s}$$

 $\Phi_R = 0.0096$ 

(Sample calculation from 57% converted experiment, reaction time 5 h) NMR yield = 39%

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{moles \ of \ product}{moles \ of \ incident \ photons}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{moles \ of \ product}{Photon \ flux \ \times \ reaction \ time}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{3.9 \times 10^{-5} \ mol}{1.69 \times 10^{-7} \ mols^{-1} \ \times \ 18000 \ s}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = 0.013$$

(Sample calculation from 29% converted experiment, reaction time 3 h)

NMR yield = 26%

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{moles \ of \ product}{moles \ of \ incident \ photons}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{moles \ of \ product}{Photon \ flux \ \times \ reaction \ time}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = \frac{2.6 \times 10^{-5} \ mol}{1.69 \times 10^{-7} \ mols^{-1} \ \times \ 10800 \ s}$$

$$\Phi_{R} = 0.014$$

Taking the average of the three experiments gives the average quantum yield of the reaction as  $\phi = 0.012$  (std. dev. 0.0023).

# Procedure for the 1 mmol Scale Reaction



An oven-dried pyrex test tube was charged sequentially with the 4-nitrobenzyl bromide **4a** (1 mmol), the *p*-tolyllboronic acid **1a** (3 mmol), KF (232 mg, 4 mmol), Ru(bpy)<sub>3</sub>(PF<sub>6</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (8.6 mg, 0.01 mmol) and Cu<sub>2</sub>O (42.9 mg, 0.3 mmol) under an argon atmosphere. H<sub>2</sub>O (540 mg, 540  $\mu$ L, 30 mmol) was then added before all reagents were dissolved in anhydrous toluene which had previously been rigorously degassed by 3 consecutive freeze-pump-thaw cycles (10 mL). The resulting solution was then sparged vigorously with argon balloons for 45 minutes in the dark, before the test tube was sealed using a fresh rubber seal and parafilm. The solution was then stirred at 50 °C under blue LED irradiation for 96 h. The reaction was then diluted with EtOAc (20 mL) and H<sub>2</sub>O (20 mL). The organic and aqueous layers were then separated, before the aqueous layer was extracted with EtOAc (3x20 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with brine (20 mL), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated *in vacuo* to yield the crude product. Purification of the crude product **5aa** as a yellow crystalline solid (116.9 mg, 0.51 mmol, 51%).

# **Starting Material Synthesis**

# Ammonia-borane (H<sub>3</sub>N.BH<sub>3</sub>)<sup>7</sup>

 $(NH_4)_2(SO_4) + NaBH_4 \longrightarrow H_3N.BH_3$ THF, Ar, 40°C

Following a procedure by Zhang,<sup>7</sup> ammonium sulphate (3.30 g, 25 mmol) and sodium borohydride (0.95 g, 25 mmol) were dissolved in anhydrous THF (150 mL) under an argon atmosphere. The resulting solution was then vigorously stirred for 3 h at 40 °C. Upon completion of the reaction, the mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature before being filtered. Concentration of the solution under reduced pressure yielded the title compound (0.59 g, 19 mmol, 76%) as a white solid, with spectral data in accordance with the literature.

**R**<sub>f</sub> ; **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup>; 3306 (N-H), 3248 (N-H), 2322, 2279, 1368, 1312 <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  4.40 (br s, 3H, NH<sub>3</sub>), 2.08 – 0.40 (m, 3H, BH<sub>3</sub>).; <sup>11</sup>B NMR (96 MHz, DMSO)  $\delta_{\rm B}$  -22.96; **m.p.** = 110-112 °C (lit.<sup>7</sup> 108.9-110 °C).

# (2,4-Dinitrophenyl)methanol<sup>7</sup> (SI-3)



Following a procedure by Zhang,<sup>7</sup> 2,4-dinitrobenzaldehyde **SI-2** (1.00 g, 5.1 mmol) and ammonia-borane (0.16 g, 5.1 mmol) were dissolved in H<sub>2</sub>O (20 mL), the resulting solution was then stirred at room temperature for 4 h. Upon completion, the reaction mixture was extracted with EtOAc (3 x 40 mL). The combined organic layers were then washed with brine, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, filtered and concentrated at reduced pressure to give the crude product. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C: EtOAc, R<sub>f</sub>: 0.29) yielded **SI-3** (0.88 g, 4.4 mmol, 87%) as an orange solid with spectral data in accordance with the literature.<sup>7</sup> Some impurities remained in the product but it was deemed pure enough to be taken to the next step.

# 1-(Bromomethyl)-2,4-dinitrobenzene<sup>8</sup> (4l)



N.B.: Reaction carried out under an argon atmosphere.

Adapting a procedure by Gheisari<sup>9</sup> (2,4-dinitrophenyl)methanol **SI-3** (500 mg, 2.52 mmol), potassium bromide (451 mg, 3.78 mmol) and phosphorus pentoxide (715 mg, 5.04 mmol) were dissolved in anhydrous acetonitrile (12.5 mL). The resulting solution was then stirred at 50 °C for 24 h. Upon completion of the reaction, the mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature before being extracted with EtOAc (3 x 20 mL). The combined organic layers were then washed with brine, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and filtered. Concentration of the solution under reduced pressure gave the crude product. Purification of the crude product by silica gel column chromatography (9:1 to 85:15 to 4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/EtOAc) yielded the title compound **4**I (470 mg, 1.81 mmol, 72%) as a yellow solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.21 (9:1 petrol 40-60 °C/EtOAc); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3022 (C-H Ar), 2877 (C-H), 1606 (C-C Ar), 1537 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1440 (C-C Ar), 1346 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.89 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 8.46 (d, *J* = 8.5, 2.4 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.84 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 4.88 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  148.2 (C), 147.9 (C), 139.3 (C), 134.1 (CH), 127.8 (CH), 121.1 (CH), 27.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>); **m.p.** = 43-46 °C (lit.<sup>8</sup> 42-43 °C).

#### 1-(1-Bromoethyl)-4-nitrobenzene<sup>10</sup> (4m)



Following a procedure by Ishii,<sup>10</sup> to a solution of sodium bromate (600 mg, 3.96 mmol) in H<sub>2</sub>O (2 mL) a solution of 4-ethylnitrobenzene (202 mg, 1.32 mmol) was added. A solution of sodium hydrogen sulphite (414 mg, 3.96 mmol) in H<sub>2</sub>O (4 mL) was added dropwise over a period of 15 minutes. Once addition was complete, the resulting solution was then stirred at r.t. for 8 h. The crude mixture was then diluted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (20 mL) before the organic and aqueous layers were separated. The aqueous layer was then washed with Et<sub>2</sub>O (2×20 mL), the combined organic layers were then washed with saturated Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>3</sub> solution (20 mL) dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> filtered and concentrated at reduced pressure. Purification of the crude residue by silica gel flash column chromatography (19:1 petrol 40-60 °C/ EtOAc) afforded the product **4m** (246.9 mg, 1.07 mmol) as yellow oil which crystallised on standing.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.36 (19:1 petrol 40-60 °C/EtOAc; **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3076 (C-H Ar), 2920 (C-H), 1596 (C-C Ar), 1513 (NO<sub>2</sub>) 1492 (C-C Ar), 1452 (C-C Ar), 1339 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.20 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.60 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 5.20 (q, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H, ArCH), 2.05 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  150.2 (C), 147.7 (C), 128.0 (CH), 124.1 (CH), 46.5 (CH), 26.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **m.p.** = 36-38 °C.

# General Procedure for the Dual Copper- and Photoredox-Catalysed C(sp<sup>2</sup>)-C(sp<sup>3</sup>) Cross-Coupling



An oven-dried one dram vial was charged sequentially with the benzyl bromide **4** (0.1 mmol), the arylboronic acid **1** (0.3 mmol), KF (23.2 mg, 0.4 mmol), Ru(bpy)<sub>3</sub>(PF<sub>6</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (0.9 mg, 0.001 mmol) and Cu<sub>2</sub>O (4.3 mg, 0.03 mmol) under an argon atmosphere. H<sub>2</sub>O (54 mg, 54  $\mu$ L, 3 mmol) was then added before all reagents were dissolved in anhydrous toluene (1 mL). The resulting solution was then sparged with an argon balloon for 5 minutes, before the vial was sealed. The solution was then stirred at 50 °C under blue LED irradiation for 16-96 h. The reaction was then diluted with EtOAc (10 mL) and H<sub>2</sub>O (10 mL). The organic and aqueous layers were then separated, before the aqueous layer was extracted with EtOAc (3x10 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with brine (10 mL), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated *in vacuo* to yield the crude product. Purification of the crude product by silica gel flash chromatography then yielded coupled products **5**.



Figure S1

# **Product Characterisation**

# 1-Methyl-4-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5aa)<sup>11</sup>



Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 16 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5aa** (14.1 mg, 0.062 mmol, 62%) as a yellow solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.26 (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) ; **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3048 (C-H Ar), 2929 (C-H), 2860 (C-H), 1601 (C-C Ar), 1592 (C-C Ar), 1511 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1339 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.14 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.13 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.06 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.04 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 100 MHz) 149.3 (C), 146.7 (C), 136.5 (C), 136.3 (C), 129.7 (CH), 129.6 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 41.5 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.1 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **m.p.** = 74-75 °C.

# 1-Methyl-4-(2-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5ab)



Following the general procedure, 2-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 16 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography ( $17:3 \rightarrow 4:1 \rightarrow 1:1$  petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5ab** (14.8 mg, 0.065 mmol, 65%) as a yellow oil.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.37 (9:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3010 (C-H Ar), 2923 (C-H), 1578 (C-C Ar), 1525 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1514 (C-C Ar), 1445 (C-C Ar), 1349 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  7.91 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 1.3 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.50 (ddd, *J* = 7.5, 7.5, 1.3 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.39 – 7.34 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.29 – 7.27 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.04 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.27 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.32 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  149.6 (C), 136.3 (C), 136.2 (C), 135.8 (C), 133.0 (CH), 132.5 (CH), 129.5 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 127.4 (CH), 124.8 (CH), 38.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.2 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **HRMS** Found (TOF MS ASAP+) [M-H]<sup>+</sup> 226.0870, C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>12</sub>NO<sub>2</sub> requires 226.0868.

# 1-(4-Methylbenzyl)-3-nitrobenzene (5ac)<sup>12</sup>



Following the general procedure, 3-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolyboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 96 h. giving an NMR yield of 44%. Analysis of the crude <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra using 1,3,5 trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard gave an NMR yield of 44% with spectral data matching literature data.<sup>12</sup> Due to co-ellution with the benzyl bromide starting material, an accurate isolated yield for the reaction could not be determined. The co-elluted mixture was dissolved in acetonitrile (5 mL) before potassium acetate (49 mg, 0.5 mmol) was added and the mixture stirred overnight. Any remaining potassium acetate was removed by vacuum filtration before the solvent was removed *in vacuo*. The resulting residue was then subjected to silica gel flash column chromatography (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) which yielded a pure sample of **5ac** as a white solid which was then used for characterisation.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.33 (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3010 (C-H Ar), 2922 (C-H), 1527 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1514 (C-C Ar), 1479 (C-C Ar), 1442 (C-C Ar), 1350 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  8.08 – 8.03 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.53 – 7.49 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.47 – 7.41 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.13 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.08 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.04 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  148.7 (C), 143.7 (C), 136.5 (C), 136.5 (C), 135.1 (CH), 129.7 (CH), 129.4 (CH), 128.9 (CH), 123.8 (CH), 121.4 (CH), 41.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.2 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **m.p.** = 61-63 °C.

# 4-(4-Methylbenzyl)benzonitrile (5ad)<sup>13</sup>

Following the general procedure, 4-(bromomethyl)benzonitrile (19.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 72 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (1:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5ad** (12.4 mg, 0.060 mmol, 60%) as a white solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> = 0.19 (1:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3020 (C-H Ar), 2924 (C-H), 2229 (C=N), 1607 (C-C Ar), 1515 (C-C Ar), 1505 (C-C Ar); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  7.56 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.28 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.12 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.05 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 3.99 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz) 147.2 (C), 136.4 (C), 132.4 (CH), 129.7 (CH), 129.6 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 119.1 (C), 110.2 (C), 41.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.1 (CH<sub>3</sub>) + 1 overlapping C; **m.p.** = 63-66 °C (lit.<sup>13</sup> 65 °C).

### Ethyl 4-(4-methylbenzyl)benzoate (5ae)<sup>14</sup>



Following the general procedure, ethyl 4-(bromomethyl)benzoate (24.3 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolyboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 96 h. Analysis of the crude <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra using 1,3,5 trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard gave an NMR yield of 44% with spectral data matching literature data.<sup>14</sup> Column chromatography was attempted but product **5ae** co-eluted with unreacted benzyl bromide starting material under a number of solvent systems and could not be separated.

#### 3-Bromo-4-(4-methylbenzyl)benzonitrile (5af)



Following the general procedure, 3-bromo-4-(bromomethyl)benzonitrile (27.5 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 72 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (1:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5af** (15.8 mg, 0.055 mmol, 55%) as a colourless oil.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.40 (1:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3023 (C-H Ar), 2922 (C-H), 2231 (C=N), 1597 (C-C Ar), 1514 (C-C Ar), 1479 (C-C Ar); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  7.86 (d, *J* = 1.7 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.50 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 1.7 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.19 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.14 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.06 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.11 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.34 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  146.8 (C), 136.7 (C), 136.1 (CH), 134.9 (C), 131.5 (CH), 131.1 (CH), 129.6 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 125.3 (C), 117.5 (C), 111.9 (C), 41.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.2 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **HRMS** Found (FTMS + p APCI) [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 286.0225, C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NBr requires 286.0226.

# 3-Fluoro-4-(4-methylbenzyl)benzonitrile (5ag)



Following the general procedure, 4-(bromomethyl)-3-fluorobenzonitrile (21.4 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 96 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (9:11 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5ag** (13.4 mg, 0.060 mmol, 60%) as a colourless oil.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.43 (2:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3023 (C-H Ar), 2922 (C-H), 2233 (C=N), 1607 (C-C Ar), 1571 (C-C Ar), 1498 (C-C Ar); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  7.39 – 7.31 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.26 – 7.21 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.21 – 7.18 (m, 1H, (*p*-tolyl)), 7.09 – 7.03 (m, 1H, (*p*-tolyl)), 7.01 – 6.97 (m, 2H, Ar-H (*p*-tolyl)), 4.00 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>).; <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  160.5 (d, *J* = 249.3 Hz, C), 138.7 (C) , 138.1 (C) , 134.7 (d, *J* = 16.0 Hz, C), 132.1 (d, *J* = 5.1 Hz, CH), 129.8 (CH), 128.9 (CH), 128.3 (d, *J* = 3.8 Hz, CH), 127.7 (CH), 126.0 (CH), 119.2 (d, *J* = 25.9 Hz, CH), 117.8 (d, *J* = 2.7 Hz, C), 111.7 (d, *J* = 9.4 Hz, C), 34.9 (d, *J* = 2.8 Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>19</sup>**F NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 376 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm F}$  -114.37 (dd, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 7.9 Hz); **HRMS** Found (TOF MS ASAP+) [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 226.1035 C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NF requires 226.1032.

Note: The seemingly "extra" CH signals in the <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra are due to the 4 CHs on the *p*-tolyl ring being inequivalent. This is supported by HSQC NMR experiments. Spectra provided in Section 8.

# 1,2,3,4,5-Pentafluoro-6-(4-methoxybenzyl)benzene (5bh)<sup>15</sup>



Following the general procedure, 1-(bromomethyl)-2,3,4,5,6-pentafluorobenzene (26.1 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with (4-methoxyphenyl)boronic acid (45.6 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 48 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (1:0 $\rightarrow$ 99:1 $\rightarrow$ 19:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5bh** (14.8 mg, 0.051 mmol, 51%) as a colourless oil.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.24 (99:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3006 (C-H Ar), 2931 (C-H), 1504 (C-C Ar), 1465 (C-C Ar), 1422 (C-C Ar), 1247 (C-O-C); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  7.16 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 6.83 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 3.96 (t, *J* = 1.9 Hz, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.78 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  158.8 (C), 129.7 (C), 129.5 (CH), 114.4 (CH), 55.4 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 27.5 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 6 quaternary Cs (4 signals expected) on the pentafluorophenyl moiety are missing due to low intensity resulting from extensive coupling to fluorine but all other spectral and characterisation

data are consistent with literature data;<sup>15</sup> <sup>19</sup>**F** NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 376 MHz)  $\delta_F$ -143.55 – -143.68 (m), -157.39 (t, *J* = 21.3 Hz), -162.32 – -162.51 (m).

# Methyl 2-(4-methoxybenzyl)-3-nitrobenzoate (5bi)



Following the general procedure, methyl 2-(bromomethyl)-3-nitrobenzoate (27.4 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with (4-methoxyphenyl)boronic acid (45.6 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 16 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography ( $1:3 \rightarrow 1:5 \rightarrow 1:7 \rightarrow 1:10$  petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5bi** (16.2 mg, 0.054 mmol, 54%) as a yellow oil.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.22 (1:7 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3026 (C-H Ar), 2925 (C-H), 2852 (C-H), 1727 (C=O), 1606 (C-C Ar), 1532 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1480 (C-C Ar), 1435 (C-C Ar), 1347 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1249 (C-O-C); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  7.94 (dd, *J* = 7.9, 1.4 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.82 (dd, *J* = 7.9, 1.4 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.44 (dd, *J* = 7.9, 7.9 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.00 – 6.91 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 6.81 – 6.72 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 4.45 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.81 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 3.75 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  167.2 (C), 158.2 (C), 152.1 (C), 135.1 (C), 134.2 (C), 133.6 (CH), 130.9 (C), 129.7 (CH), 127.4 (CH), 126.9 (CH), 113.9 (CH), 55.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 52.8 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 32.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>); **HRMS** Found (TOF MS ASAP+) [M-CH<sub>3</sub>]<sup>+</sup> 286.0714 C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>12</sub>NO<sub>5</sub> requires 286.0715.

### Methyl 3-chloro-4-(4-methylbenzyl)benzoate (5aj)



Following the general procedure, methyl 2-(bromomethyl)-5-chlorobenzoate (26.4 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolyboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 96 h. Analysis of the crude <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra using 1,3,5 trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard gave an NMR yield of 47%. Due to co-ellution with the benzyl bromide starting material an accurate isolated yield for the reaction could not be determined. **5aj** was previously unknown in the literature therefore, the co-elluted mixture was dissolved in acetonitrile (5 mL) before potassium acetate (49 mg, 0.5 mmol) was added and the mixture stirred overnight. Any remaining potassium acetate was removed by vacuum filtration before the solvent was removed *in vacuo*. The resulting residue was then subjected to silica gel flash column chromatography (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/tol-uene) which yielded a pure sample of **5aj** as a colourless oil which was then used for characterisation.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.28 (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3023 (C-H Ar), 2952 (C-H), 2924 (C-H), 1721 (C=O), 1604 (C-C Ar), 1562 (C-C Ar), 1514 (C-C Ar), 1436 (C-C Ar); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$ 

8.04 (d, J = 1.7 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.83 (dd, J = 8.0, 1.7 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.20 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.12 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.07 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.10 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.91 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{C}$  166.1 (C), 144.3 (C), 136.3 (C), 135.7 (C), 134.6 (C), 131.0 (CH), 130.8 (CH), 129.9 (C), 129.5 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 52.4 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 39.1 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.2 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **HRMS** Found (TOF MS ASAP+) [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 275.0840 C<sub>16</sub>H<sub>16</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Cl requires 275.0839.

#### 1-Methyl-4-(1-(4-nitrophenyl)ethyl)benzene (5am)<sup>16</sup>



Following the general procedure, 1-(1-bromoethyl)-4-nitrobenzene (23.0 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 4-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 40 h. Analysis of the crude <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra using 1,3,5 trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard gave an NMR yield of 45%. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5am** (6.4 mg, 0.027 mmol, 27%) as a yellow solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.33 (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 2970 (C-H Ar), 2925 (C-H), 1597 (C-C Ar), 1514 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1492 (C-C Ar), 1453 (C-C Ar), 1345 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.13 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.36 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.13 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.08 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.22 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H, CH), 2.32 (s, 3H, Ar-CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.66 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  154.5 (C), 146.6 (C), 141.7 (C), 136.5 (C), 129.6 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 123.8 (CH), 44.6 (CH), 21.7 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.1 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **m.p.** = 69-71 °C.

### 1-Methyl-3-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5ba)<sup>17</sup>



Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 3-tolylboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 16 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5ba** (13.0 mg, 0.057 mmol, 57%) as a yellow oil.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.34 (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3010 (C-H Ar), 2922 (C-H), 1605 (C-C Ar), 1515 (NO<sub>2</sub>) 1492 (C-H Ar), 1345 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.14 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.34 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.25 – 7.18 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.09 – 7.03 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.00 – 6.95 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 4.04 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  149.1 (C), 146.7 (C), 139.3 (C), 138.7 (C), 129.9 (CH), 129.8 (CH), 128.9 (CH), 127.7 (CH), 126.1(CH), 123.9 (CH), 41.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>).

# 1-Methyl-2-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5ca)<sup>18</sup>



Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 2-tolyboronic acid (40.8 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 96 h. Analysis of the crude <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra using 1,3,5 trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard gave an NMR yield of 51%. Due to coellution with the benzyl bromide starting material an accurate isolated yield for the reaction could not be determined. **5ca** was previously known in the literature but as part of a mixture of isomers, therefore, the co-elluted mixture was dissolved in acetonitrile (5 mL) before potassium acetate (49 mg, 0.5 mmol) was added and the mixture stirred overnight. Any remaining potassium acetate was removed by vacuum filtration before the solvent was removed *in vacuo*. The resulting residue was then subjected to silica gel flash column chromatography (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) which yielded a pure sample of **5ca** as a colourless oil which was then used for characterisation.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.30 (7:3 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3013 (C-H Ar), 2925 (C-H), 1597 (C-C Ar), 1516 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1492 (C-C Ar), 1462 (C-C Ar), 1345 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.13 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.26 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.22 – 7.17 (m, 3H, Ar-H), 7.12 – 7.08 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 4.09 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.21 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  148.5 (C), 146.7 (C), 137.3 (C), 136.7 (C), 130.8 (CH), 130.2 (CH), 129.5 (CH), 127.3 (CH), 126.5 (CH), 123.8 (CH), 39.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 19.8 (CH<sub>3</sub>).

### 1-Benzyl-4-nitrobenzene (5da)<sup>11</sup>

Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with 2-tolyboronic acid (36.6 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 16 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5da** (12.3 mg, 0.058 mmol, 58%) as a yellow oil

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.30 (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3028 (C-H Ar), 2922 (C-H), 1605 (C-C Ar), 1595 (C-C Ar), 1516 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1495 (C-C Ar), 1453 (C-H), 1347 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.15 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.37 – 7.30 (m, 4H, Ar-H), 7.28 – 7.22 (m, 1H, Ar-H), 7.17 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H,Ar-H), 4.08 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  149.0 (C), 146.8 (C), 139.3 (C), 129.8 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 126.9 (CH), 123.9 (CH), 41.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>).

### 1-Methoxy-4-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5ea)<sup>19</sup>

Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with (4-methoxyphenyl)boronic acid (45.6 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 16 h. Analysis of the crude <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra using 1,3,5 trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard gave an NMR yield of 57%, with spectral data matching literature data.<sup>19</sup> Column chromatography was attempted but product **5ea** co-elluted with homocoupling product under a number of solvent systems and could not be separated.

#### 1-Chloro-4-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5fa)<sup>11</sup>



Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with (4-chlorophenyl)boronic acid (46.9mg, 0.3 mmol) for 72 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (8:1:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene/ethyl acetate) to yield product **5fa** (10.8 mg, 0.044 mmol, 44%) as an orange solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.51 (8:1:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene/ethyl acetate); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3028 (C-H Ar), 2926 (C-H), 1606 (C-C Ar), 1519 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1492 (C-C Ar), 1347 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.15 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.29 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.05 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>).; <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  148.3 (C), 146.9 (C), 137.8 (C), 132.9 (C), 130.4 (CH), 129.8 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 124.0 (CH), 41.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>); **m.p.** = 63-66 °C.

#### 1-Fluoro-4-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5ga)<sup>20</sup>



Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with (4-fluorophenyl)boronic acid (42.0 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 72 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5ga** (12.1 mg, 0.052 mmol, 52%) as an off-white solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.25 (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3029 (C-H Ar), 2925 (C-H), 2853 (C-H), 1606 (C-C Ar), 1520 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1510 (C-C Ar), 1492 (C-C Ar) 1347 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.15 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.31 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.19 – 7.07 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 7.07 – 6.94 (m, 2H, Ar-H), 4.05 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  161.9 (d, *J* = 245.3 Hz, C), 148.7 (C), 146.8 (C), 135.0 (d, *J* = 3.2 Hz, C), 130.6 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, CH), 129.7 (CH), 124.0 (CH),

115.8 (d, J = 21.5 Hz, CH), 41.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>19</sup>F NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 282 MHz)  $\delta_F$ -116.05 (tt, J = 9.3, 5.3 Hz); m.p. = 55-56 °C (lit.<sup>20</sup> 58-60 °C).

### 1-Chloro-2-methyl-4-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5ha)



Following the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with (4-chloro-3-methylphenyl)boronic acid (51.1 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 96 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5ha** (13.0 mg, 0.050 mmol, 50%) as a colorless solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.30 (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3027 (C-H Ar), 2925 (C-H), 2852 (C-H), 1606 (C-C Ar), 1597 (C-C Ar), 1517 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1480 (C-C Ar), 1346 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.15 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.28 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.02 (d, *J* = 1.7 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 6.93 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 1.7 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 4.01 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.34 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  148.5 (C), 146.9 (C), 137.8 (C), 136.6 (C), 133.0 (C), 131.7 (CH), 129.7 (CH), 129.6 (CH), 127.8 (CH), 124.0 (CH), 41.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 20.2 (CH<sub>3</sub>); **HRMS** Found (TOF MS ASAP+) [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 262.0640 C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>Cl requires 262.0635; **m.p.** = 78-79 °C.

### Methyl 2-(3-chloro-4-methoxybenzyl)-3-nitrobenzoate (5ib)



Following the general procedure, methyl 2-(bromomethyl)-3-nitrobenzoate (27.4 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with (3-chloro-4-methoxyphenyl)boronic acid (55.9 mg, 0.3 mmol) for 72 h. The crude was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography ( $1:2 \rightarrow 1:3 \rightarrow 1:5$  petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) to yield product **5ib** (16.8 mg, 0.050 mmol, 50%) as a yellow solid.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.30 (petrol 40-60 °C/toluene 1:3) ; **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3022 (C-H Ar), 2954 (C-H), 1727 (C=O), 1606 (C-C Ar), 1532 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1501 (C-H Ar), 1463 (C-C Ar), 1441 (C-C Ar), 1359 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1286 (ester C-O) 1259 (C-O-C); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  7.99 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 1.4 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.86 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 1.4 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.48 (dd, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.07 (d, *J* = 2.2 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 6.90 (dd, *J* = 8.4, 2.2 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 6.79 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 4.44 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.84 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 3.83 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  166.9 (C), 153.7 (C), 152.1 (C), 134.4 (C), 134.1 (C), 133.9 (CH), 132.1 (C), 130.4 (CH), 127.9 (CH), 127.7 (CH), 127.1 (CH), 122.5 (C), 112.1 (CH), 56.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 52.9 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 32.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>); **HRMS** Found (TOF MS ASAP+) [M-CH<sub>3</sub>]<sup>+</sup> 304.0379 C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>11</sub>NO<sub>4</sub>Cl requires 304.0377; **m.p.** = 80-81 °C.

#### 1-Iodo-4-(4-nitrobenzyl)benzene (5la)

 $O_2N$ 

Adapting the general procedure, 4-nitrobenzyl bromide (21.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) was reacted with tris(4-iodophenyl)boroxine (110.4 mg, 0.16 mmol) added in two portions at the start and half-way through the reaction time of 72 h. After the second addition the vial was sparged with argon. Analysis of the crude <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra using 1,3,5 trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard gave an NMR yield of 44%. Due to co-ellution with the benzyl bromide starting material an accurate isolated yield for the reaction could not be determined. **5la** was previously unknown in the literature therefore, the co-elluted mixture was dissolved in acetonitrile (5 mL) before potassium acetate (49 mg, 0.5 mmol) was added and the mixture stirred overnight. Any remaining potassium acetate was removed by vacuum filtration before the solvent was removed *in vacuo*. The resulting residue was then subjected to silica gel flash column chromatography (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene) which yielded a pure sample of **5la** as a white solid which was then used for characterisation.

**R**<sub>f</sub> 0.22 (4:1 petrol 40-60 °C/toluene); **v**<sub>max</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup> 3032 (C-H Ar), 2923 (C-H) 2855 (C-H), 1599 (C-C Ar), 1520 (NO<sub>2</sub>), 1493 (C-C Ar), 1484 (C-C Ar), 1400 (C-C Ar), 1346 (NO<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm H}$  8.15 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.64 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.31 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 6.92 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.02 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 101 MHz)  $\delta_{\rm C}$  148.1(C), 146.9 (C), 139.0 (C), 138.1 (CH), 131.1 (CH), 129.8 (CH), 124.0 (CH), 92.2 (C), 41.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>); **HRMS** Found (TOF MS ASAP+) [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 339.9834 C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>11</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>I requires 339.9834; **m.p.** = 108-110 °C.



























Expansion:







ebmf178bchar.1.fid 19F 376.5MHz Job 34760 McLean Euan B 178BCHAR CDCl3 25.0°C 0hours 5min fluorine characterisation













ebmh131char.1.fid 1H 400.1MHz Job 32996 McLean Euan B 131CHAR CDCI3 25.0°C proton characterisation



















ebmh187bchar.1.fid 1H 300.1MHz Job 80443 McLean Euan B 187BCHAR CDCl3 25.1°C proton characterisation



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