

# Phosphine promoted substituent redistribution reactions of B-chlorocatechol borane: molecular structures of ClBcat, BrBcat and L·ClBcat (cat = 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>; L = PMe<sub>3</sub>, PEt<sub>3</sub>, PBu<sup>t</sup><sub>3</sub>, PCy<sub>3</sub>, NEt<sub>3</sub>)<sup>†</sup>

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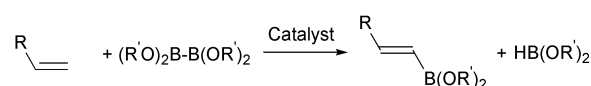
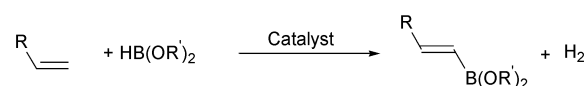
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In order to evaluate the potential for side reactions when using B-chlorocatechol borane (ClBcat) in stoichiometric or catalytic transformations involving metal phosphine complexes, we examined the interaction between ClBcat and a series of PR<sub>3</sub> compounds. Reactions of ClBcat with the basic phosphines PMe<sub>3</sub>, PEt<sub>3</sub>, PMe<sub>2</sub>Ph and PBu<sup>t</sup><sub>3</sub>, in exactly 1 : 1 stoichiometry, all afforded crystalline adducts of the form R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat, which have been characterised spectroscopically. All display broad singlets at room temperature in both <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} and <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra with no B–P coupling observed. The low temperature <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} and <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra, however, do show B–P coupling, suggesting rapid dissociation at room temperature. The compounds ClBcat, BrBcat, and the adducts between ClBcat and PMe<sub>3</sub>, PEt<sub>3</sub> and PBu<sup>t</sup><sub>3</sub> have been characterised by single crystal X-ray diffraction. In ClBcat and BrBcat, the halogen contributes little π-bonding to boron as the B–O bond lengths are identical in both compounds. The reaction of ClBcat with a small excess of PCy<sub>3</sub> yielded Cy<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat, which has also been characterised by single crystal X-ray diffraction and shows considerable distortion. The reaction between ClBcat and the less basic phosphines PPh<sub>3</sub> and PPh<sub>2</sub>Me yielded only the redistribution products R<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>. In fact, reaction of all of the phosphines with an excess of ClBcat gave only redistribution products, although there was evidence for an intermediate in the <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra, with PMe<sub>3</sub> and PEt<sub>3</sub>. The isolated R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat adducts proved unstable, even at low temperature in the solid state, eventually leading to R<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>. Reaction of ClBcat with NEt<sub>3</sub> afforded Et<sub>3</sub>N·ClBcat, which was characterised spectroscopically and by single crystal X-ray diffraction. This adduct is stable both in solution and in the solid state.

## Introduction

There are now many examples of the transition metal catalysed addition of boron compounds to various unsaturated substrates, in reactions such as hydroboration,<sup>1–3</sup> diboration,<sup>4,5</sup> dehydrogenative borylation of alkenes,<sup>6–16</sup> silylboration,<sup>17,18</sup> thioboration,<sup>19–21</sup> stannylboration,<sup>22,23</sup> reactions of aryl or vinyl halides or triflates with B<sub>2</sub>(OR)<sub>4</sub> or HB(OR)<sub>2</sub>,<sup>24–34</sup> and direct activation of C–H bonds in alkanes and arenes.<sup>35–41</sup> These reactions all involve an EBcat or EBpin species (E = H, Bcat, Bpin, SR, SiR<sub>3</sub>, SnR<sub>3</sub>, cat = 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, pin = OCMe<sub>2</sub>CMe<sub>2</sub>O), and several reviews highlight studies of the intermediate metal-boryl species.<sup>42–45</sup> Whilst dehydrogenative borylation of alkenes to vinylboronate esters using HB(OR)<sub>2</sub> or B<sub>2</sub>(OR)<sub>4</sub> is known,<sup>6–16</sup> a more attractive and less expensive variant would be the use of a commercially available ClB(OR)<sub>2</sub> reagent, such as ClBcat, and base in a boron analogue of the Heck reaction (Scheme 1). Such a reaction would likely entail the oxidative addition of ClBcat to a metal centre,<sup>46</sup> the use of tertiary amines as base, and the use of phosphine ligands on a late transition metal catalyst. Hence, there is a need to ascertain what, if any, reactivity there is between ClBcat and R<sub>3</sub>P or R<sub>3</sub>N, as it is known that nucleophiles,<sup>47–49</sup> including phosphines,<sup>49</sup> can

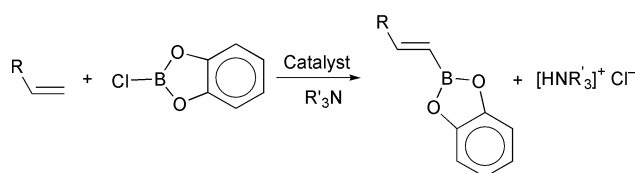
### Dehydrogenative Borylation



### Cross-Coupling



### Proposed Boron Analogue of Heck Reaction



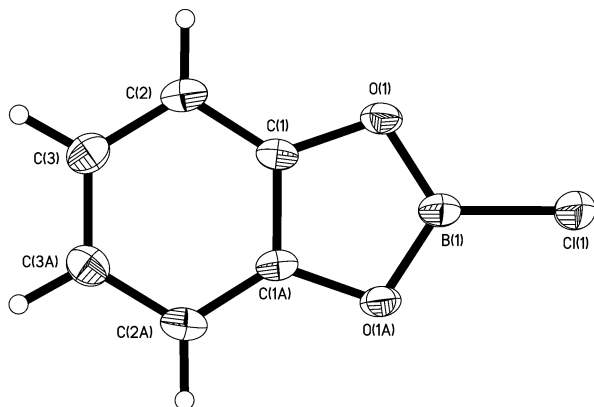
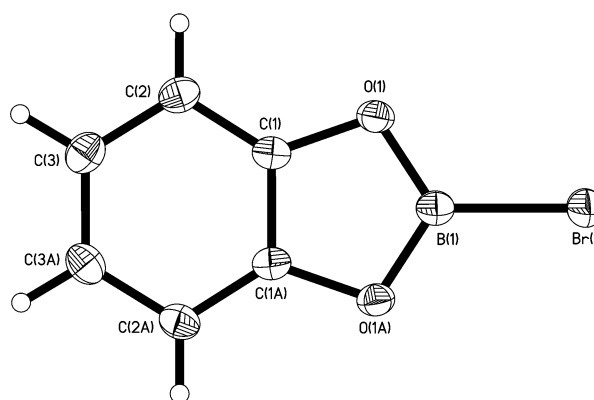
<sup>†</sup> B-chlorocatechol borane = 2-chloro-1,3,2-benzodioxaborole.

**Scheme 1** Catalysed routes to vinylboronate esters from alkenes.

**Table 1** Selected bond lengths (Å) and bond angles (°) for ClBcat, BrBcat and the R<sub>3</sub>P and Et<sub>3</sub>N adducts of ClBcat

	ClBcat <b>1</b> <sup>a</sup>	BrBcat <b>2</b> <sup>a</sup>	Me <sub>3</sub> P·ClBcat <b>3a</b> <sup>b</sup>		Et <sub>3</sub> P·ClBcat <b>3b</b>	Bu <sup>t</sup> <sub>3</sub> P·ClBcat <b>3d</b>	Cy <sub>3</sub> P·ClBcat <b>3e</b>	Et <sub>3</sub> N·ClBcat <b>3h</b>
			Molecule A	Molecule B				
B–X (X = Cl, Br)	1.744(3)	1.898(3)	1.9105(17)	1.9178(17)	1.9254(18)	1.914(2)	1.9946(17)	1.8758(10)
B–O(1)	1.381(2)	1.381(2)	1.4565(18)	1.4631(19)	1.459(2)	1.459(2)	1.4721(18)	1.4527(11)
B–O(2)	1.381(2)	1.381(2)	1.4578(18)	1.4559(18)	1.463(2)	1.470(2)	1.4083(16)	1.4576(13)
B–E (E = N, P)			1.9646(17)	1.9691(17)	2.0079(18)	2.048(2)	1.9905(16)	1.6433(13)
C(1)–O(1)	1.395(2)	1.395(2)	1.3706(17)	1.3725(17)	1.3817(18)	1.372(2)	1.3646(16)	1.3717(10)
C(2)–O(2)	1.395(2)	1.395(2)	1.3719(17)	1.3699(17)	1.3776(19)	1.372(2)	1.3971(17)	1.3748(10)
C(1)–C(2)	1.394(3)	1.396(3)	1.393(2)	1.396(2)	1.394(2)	1.398(2)	1.567(2)	1.3905(13)
C(2)–C(3)	1.381(2)	1.402(3)	1.375(2)	1.377(2)	1.387(2)	1.383(2)	1.379(2)	1.3785(13)
C(3)–C(4)	1.400(2)	1.379(2)	1.405(2)	1.404(2)	1.405(3)	1.402(2)	1.346(2)	1.4114(15)
C(4)–C(5)	1.400(3)	1.402(3)	1.380(3)	1.387(2)	1.391(3)	1.382(2)	1.421(2)	1.3829(17)
C(5)–C(6)	1.400(2)	1.398(3)	1.402(2)	1.402(2)	1.410(3)	1.405(2)	1.3519(19)	1.4065(15)
C(1)–C(6)	1.381(2)	1.379(2)	1.377(2)	1.378(2)	1.381(2)	1.380(2)	1.3539(18)	1.3821(12)
E–C(10)			1.7991(16)	1.799(16)	1.8210(18)	1.900(2)	1.8835(14)	1.5120(12)
E–C(20)			1.7917(16)	1.7931(15)	1.8215(17)	1.903(2)	1.7680(13)	1.5261(13)
E–C(30)			1.8007(16)	1.7928(16)	1.8247(18)	1.908(2)	1.8698(19)	1.5198(13)
B–Plane <sup>c</sup>			0.1539	0.2006	0.1435	0.1123	0.2537	0.0363
O(1)–B–O(2)	114.0(2)	113.9(2)	107.74(11)	107.25(12)	107.82(13)	107.10(11)	105.04(11)	107.32(7)
O(1)–B–X	123.00(10)	123.1(1)	111.86(10)	110.24(10)	109.58(11)	109.19(9)	108.69(6)	111.16(7)
O(2)–B–X	123.00(10)	123.1(1)	110.79(10)	110.71(10)	110.90(11)	108.98(9)	110.64(6)	111.43(6)
O(1)–B–E			109.77(10)	113.75(10)	109.69(11)	111.40(9)	107.79(6)	109.73(7)
O(2)–B–E			112.05(10)	110.29(10)	111.67(11)	110.51(9)	113.34(6)	110.35(7)
Cl–B–E			104.68(8)	104.64(8)	107.17(8)	109.59(7)	110.01(6)	106.86(6)
C(10)–E–C(20)			107.40(8)	108.07(8)	105.98(9)	110.95(6)	106.31(6)	110.97(7)
C(20)–E–C(30)			109.44(8)	107.81(8)	107.11(8)	110.30(6)	108.69(6)	105.01(8)
C(10)–E–C(30)			107.71(8)	108.17(8)	107.99(8)	110.23(6)	110.64(6)	110.26(8)
C(10)–E–B			109.93(8)	110.68(7)	115.37(8)	110.75(6)	107.79(6)	106.72(7)
C(20)–E–B			112.35(8)	113.05(7)	110.05(8)	107.74(6)	113.34(6)	111.20(8)
C(30)–E–B			109.87(8)	108.91(7)	109.97(8)	106.75(6)	110.01(6)	112.76(7)
B–O(1)–C(1)	103.71(13)	103.9(1)	105.28(11)	104.94(11)	105.13(12)	105.71(10)	107.52(10)	106.10(7)
B–O(2)–C(2)	103.70(13)	103.9(1)	104.97(11)	105.21(11)	105.10(12)	105.39(10)	105.33(10)	105.94(7)

<sup>a</sup> Symmetry related data included for ease of comparison. Atom numbering is as follows: C(2) = C(1A), C(3) = C(2A), C(4) = C(3A), C(5) = C(3), C(6) = C(2), O(2) = O(1A). <sup>b</sup> Compound **3a** contains two independent molecules in the asymmetric unit. Molecule A: C(10) = C(7), C(20) = C(8), C(30) = C(9); molecule B: E = P(2), B = B(2), C(1)–C(6) = C(11)–C(16); C(10) = C(17), C(20) = C(18), C(30) = C(19). <sup>c</sup> Distance from B(1) to least-squares plane defined by O(1), C(1), C(6), C(5), C(4), C(3), C(2), O(2).

**Fig. 1** Structure of ClBcat **1**. Atoms related by the two-fold axis are marked 'A'.**Fig. 2** Structure of BrBcat **2**. Atoms related by the two-fold axis are marked 'A'.

promote the degradation of HBcat, and it has been suggested<sup>48</sup> that PMe<sub>3</sub> can promote degradation of ClBcat.

We have discussed elsewhere<sup>50</sup> the adducts between BCl<sub>3</sub> and phosphines. Here, we present studies of the reaction of ClBcat with a variety of phosphines, Et<sub>3</sub>N, and pyridines in order to assess the stability of any adducts that form, and the nature and occurrence of boron substituent redistribution processes.

## Results and discussion

Single crystal structures of ClBcat **1** (Fig. 1) and BrBcat **2** (Fig. 2) have been obtained and the relevant bond distances and angles are listed in Table 1. Crystals of **1** and **2** are isomorphous and in each case the molecule is located on a two-fold axis in

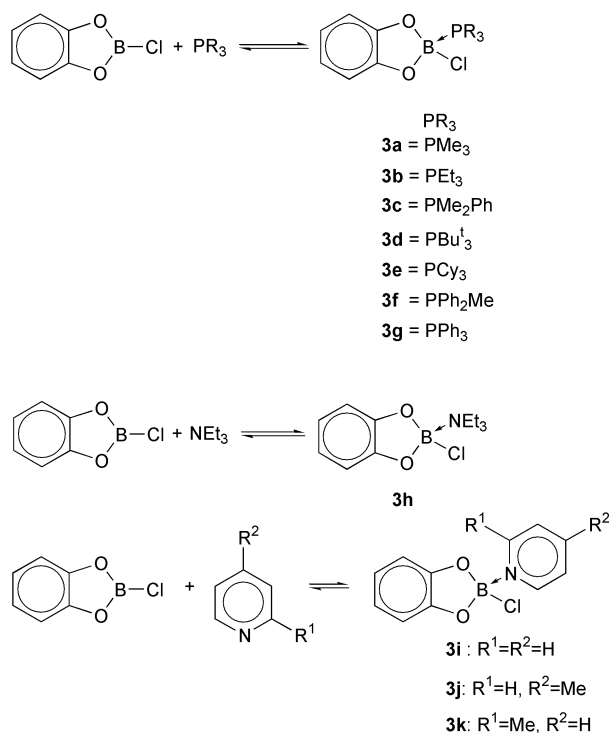
space group *C2/c*, passing through the halogen and boron atoms. The boron atom exhibits trigonal planar geometry with the sum of the angles around B being 360.0(2)° for **1** and 360.1(2)° for **2**. The B–O bond lengths, of 1.381(2) Å in both cases, are unaffected by the change of halogen, showing that the halogens contribute equally, and hence probably minimally, to any  $\pi$ -bonding to the boron atom. An <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR study of ClBcat in dry CDCl<sub>3</sub> solution at room temperature showed no evidence of decomposition over a period of at least 8 weeks.

The reaction of **1** with 1.0 equivalents of each of the phosphines PMe<sub>3</sub>, PEt<sub>3</sub>, PMe<sub>2</sub>Ph and PBu<sup>t</sup><sub>3</sub>, yielded the R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat adducts **3a**, **3b**, **3c** and **3d** respectively. The ambient temperature <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra of the adducts each displays a broad peak, at a frequency considerably shifted from the position of

**Table 2** Ambient and low temperature (−40 °C)  $^{31}\text{P}$  and  $^{11}\text{B}$  NMR data for **1** and **3a–e**

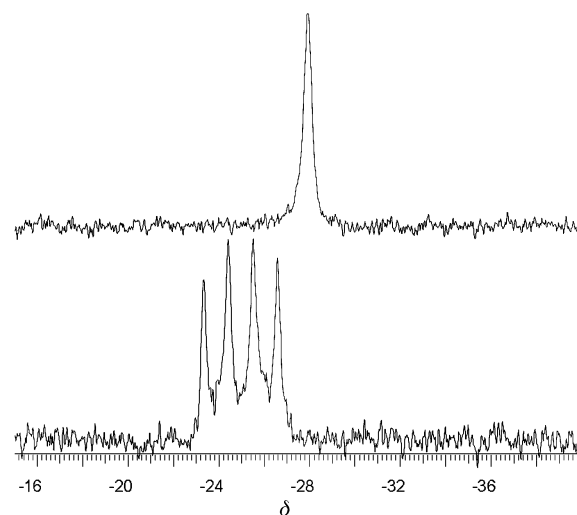
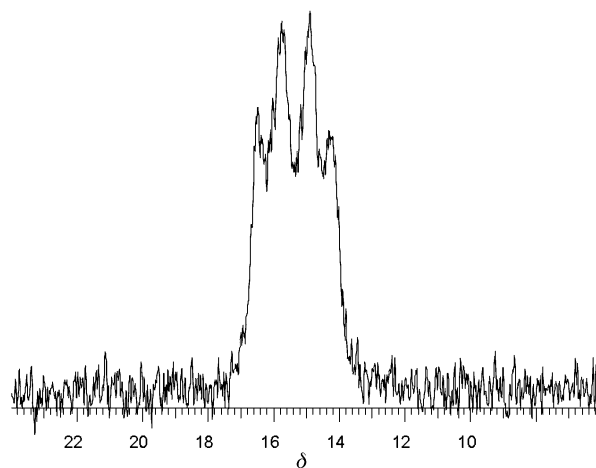
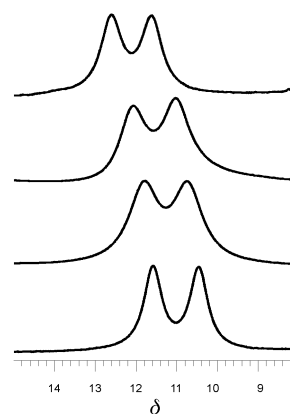
Compound	$^{31}\text{P}$ shift (ppm) at ambient temperature	$^{31}\text{P}$ shift (ppm) at −40 °C	$^{31}\text{P}$ shift (ppm) of free phosphine	$^{11}\text{B}$ shift (ppm) at ambient temperature	$^{11}\text{B}$ shift (ppm) at −40 °C
<b>1</b>				28.4	
<b>3a</b>	−27.9	−24.9	−61.4	11.1	11.0
<b>3b</b>	1.4	6.8	−19.9	11.4	11.3
<b>3c</b>	−29.8	−22.8	−45.4	11.8	11.6
<b>3d</b>	25.5	15.3	61.8	15.8	12.1
<b>3e</b>	−3.3	−6.6	10.9	12.2	11.8

that of free phosphine (higher frequency for **3a**, **3b** and **3c**, lower for **3d**), with no evidence of any coupling to boron (Table 2). The absence of observed coupling, and the width of the peak, compared to the sharp signals displayed by the free phosphines, both point to the adduct being in equilibrium with free ClBcat and phosphine at this temperature (Scheme 2).

**Scheme 2** Adduct formation from reaction of ClBcat and  $\text{LR}_3$ .

The low temperature  $^{31}\text{P}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra of **3a**, **3b** and **3c**, all show a further shift to higher frequency with evidence of P–B coupling, at −20 °C, and display an approximate 1 : 1 : 1 : 1 quartet at −40 °C, as expected for coupling to  $^{11}\text{B}$  ( $I=3/2$ ), with  $J_{\text{B-P}}=175$ , 169 and 166 Hz for **3a**, **3b** and **3c**, respectively (Fig. 3). Coupling to  $^{10}\text{B}$  is not observed. Adduct **3d**, however, shows no P–B coupling at −20 °C, but shifts further to lower frequency and shows coupling at −40 °C and below, with  $J_{\text{B-P}}=160$  Hz, and with a splitting pattern which is, approximately, a 1 : 2 : 2 : 1 quartet (Fig. 4). This, it seems likely, is due to the partial thermal decoupling of the boron quadrupole which results in the quartet collapsing towards a singlet, with the two outside peaks decreasing in size, and the two central peaks growing in intensity. The spectrum taken at −60 °C shows a more exaggerated distortion from 1 : 1 : 1 : 1 and is consistent with the thermal decoupling of  $^{11}\text{B}$ .

The ambient temperature  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra of **3a**, **3b**, **3c** and **3d** all display a peak considerably shifted to lower frequency (Table 2) from the position of free ClBcat ( $\delta$  28.4) with, as expected, no evidence of coupling to  $^{31}\text{P}$ . The low temperature  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra at −40 °C, however, all show broad doublets at a frequency shifted slightly further away from free ClBcat (Fig. 5) and give B–P coupling constants of 178, 167, 166 and 158 Hz for **3a**, **3b**, **3c** and **3d** respectively.

**Fig. 3**  $^{31}\text{P}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra of **3a** in toluene–10%  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$  at ambient temperature (top) and at −40 °C.**Fig. 4**  $^{31}\text{P}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectrum of **3d** in toluene–10%  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$  at −40 °C.**Fig. 5**  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra of **3a** (bottom), **3b**, **3c** and **3d** (top) in toluene–10%  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$  at −40 °C.

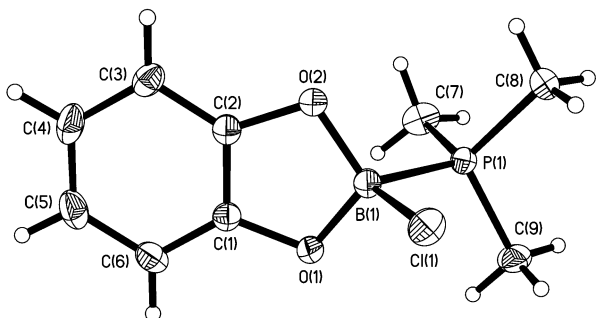


Fig. 6 Structure of one of the two crystallographically independent molecules of  $\text{Me}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$ , **3a**.

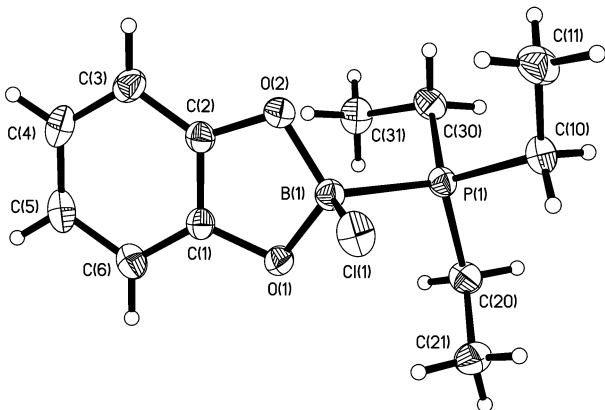


Fig. 7 Structure of  $\text{Et}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$  **3b**.

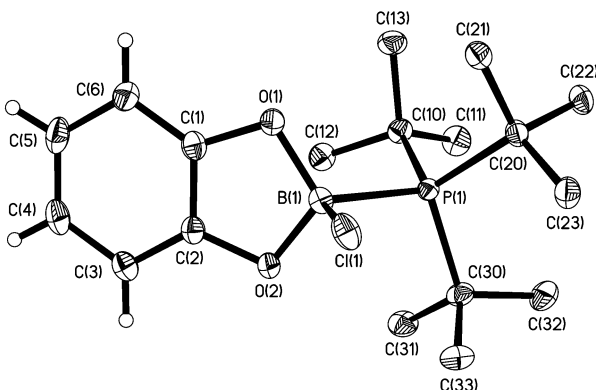


Fig. 8 Structure of  $\text{Bu}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$  **3d**. Hydrogens on the  $\text{Bu}^t$  groups are omitted for clarity.

It is clear from the temperature dependence of the  $^{31}\text{P}$  and  $^{11}\text{B}$  shifts in Table 2, that the adducts **3a–e** are mostly bound in solution at ambient temperature. However, **3d** shows substantial shifts in both  $^{31}\text{P}$  and  $^{11}\text{B}$  resonances as a function of temperature suggesting more dissociation than the others, consistent with  $\text{PBU}_3$  having a particularly large cone angle (*vide infra*).

It was noticed that the  $^3J_{\text{H-P}}$  coupling constant in **3b** was 16 Hz whereas that for **3d** was 11 Hz. A low temperature  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum of **3d** at  $-40^\circ\text{C}$ , however, gave  $^3J_{\text{H-P}} = 15$  Hz, with the peak shifted by *ca.* 0.1 ppm to  $\delta$  1.65, further indicating that the adducts are undergoing rapid exchange at room temperature. There is also a change in coupling constant from that in the free phosphine ( $^3J_{\text{H-P}} = 10$  Hz), indicating that the increase in coupling constant gives a measure of the association between the phosphine and **1**.

The single crystal structures of **3a**, **3b** and **3d** have been determined by X-ray diffraction; molecular structures are shown in Figs. 6–8, with bond distances and angles provided in Table 1. The B–P bond lengths for **3a**, **3b** and **3d** are 1.967(2) (average for the two independent molecules), 2.008(2) and 2.048(2) Å, respectively.

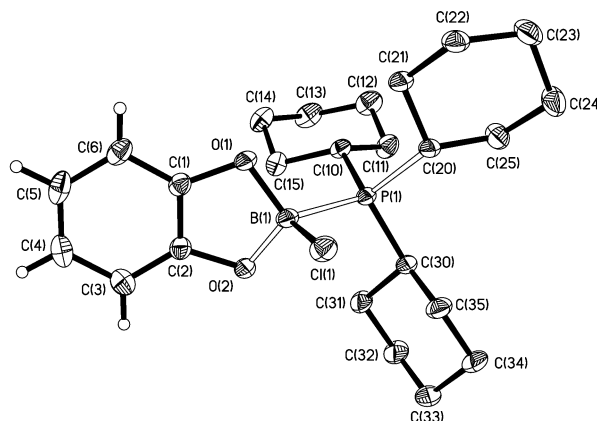


Fig. 9 Structure of  $\text{Cy}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$  **3e**. Hydrogens on the Cy rings omitted for clarity. Hollow bonds highlight distances which deviate significantly from those in other adducts.

The increase in B–P bond lengths correlates with the decrease in B–P coupling constants and the apparent stability of the adducts. These trends are probably due to a compromise between basicity,<sup>51</sup> measured as the acidity of the conjugate acid  $[\text{HPR}_3]^+$ , and cone angle<sup>52</sup> of the phosphine. For example, the  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}}$  of  $[\text{HPBu}_3]^+$  is 11.4 vs. 8.65 for  $[\text{HPMe}_3]^+$ . The cone angle of  $\text{PBU}_3$ , however, is  $182^\circ$  vs.  $118^\circ$  for  $\text{PMe}_3$ , and so  $\text{Me}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$  contains the stronger B–P interaction. Similarly,  $[\text{HPe}_3]^+$  has a  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}}$  of 8.69, very close to that of  $[\text{HPMe}_3]^+$ , but a cone angle of  $132^\circ$  and so forms a weaker adduct than  $\text{PMe}_3$ . Although purely empirical, this does provide a good guide to explaining the adduct stabilities, structural and spectroscopic parameters.

As expected, the increase in coordination number at boron from three to four with change in hybridisation from  $\text{sp}^2$  to  $\text{sp}^3$ , and the concomitant increase in steric repulsion, cause a lengthening of the B–Cl and B–O bonds from those in **1**. The B–Cl bonds lengthen by *ca.* 10% from 1.744(3) Å in **1** to 1.914(2), 1.925(2) and 1.914(2) Å in **3a**, **3b** and **3d**, respectively, and the B–O bonds lengthen by *ca.* 6% [an average of 1.461(2) Å]. Note also that O–B( $p_z$ )  $\pi$ -bonding should be minimal in the four-coordinate adducts as B( $p_z$ ) is now tied up in  $\sigma$ -bonding to P. The boron atom is also ‘tipped’ out of the plane of the catechol ring, by between *ca.* 0.11 and 0.20 Å (Table 1). The B–P bond lengths in Table 1 are comparable with those in the analogous  $\text{R}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$  adducts; for example the B–P bond lengths in  $\text{Me}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$ ,  $\text{Et}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$ , and  $\text{Bu}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$  are 1.957(5), 1.981(3) and 2.055(2) Å respectively.<sup>50</sup>

The 1 : 1 reaction of **ClBcat** with  $\text{PCy}_3$  yielded a mixture of products, as indicated by  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectroscopy, including  $\text{Cy}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$  **3e** ( $\delta$  12.1), the redistribution products  $\text{Cy}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$  ( $\delta$  3.7, d,  $J_{\text{B-P}} = 147$  Hz) and  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$  ( $\delta$  23.4) and additional peaks at  $\delta$  21.9 and 11.1. In contrast, the  $^{31}\text{P}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectrum showed only a broad peak due to **3e** at  $\delta$  –3.3 which presumably obscures the signal due to the  $\text{Cy}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$  adduct ( $\delta$  3.2, q,  $J_{\text{P-B}} = 147$  Hz).<sup>50</sup> A 1 : 1 reaction of  $\text{PCy}_3$  and **ClBcat** **1** gave a small amount of a white precipitate of **3e**, recrystallisation of which yielded single crystals. The  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectrum showed that the crystals were **3e**, but an additional peak was observed at  $\delta$  22.2. The level of this impurity changes, however, depending on concentration of the sample and on the time in solution, so the formation of the impurity would seem to take place in solution. The low temperature  $^{31}\text{P}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectrum of **3e** showed some coupling at  $-20^\circ\text{C}$ , and, at  $-40^\circ\text{C}$ , displayed a broad 1 : 2 : 2 : 1 quartet, similar to **3d**, at  $\delta$  –6.6, with  $J_{\text{P-B}} = 159$  Hz. The low temperature  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectrum at  $-40^\circ\text{C}$  showed a doublet at  $\delta$  11.8 with  $J_{\text{B-P}} = 160$  Hz.

The molecular structure of **3e** has been obtained (Fig. 9) and comparison of the structures of the four adducts **3a**, **3b**, **3d** and **3e**, determined by X-ray crystallography, reveals that of **3e** to be

**Table 3** Comparison of selected bond lengths (Å) and energies between experimental and optimised (HF/6-31G\*) geometries of R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat adducts

R		B–O	B–Cl	B–P	P–C	E <sub>h</sub> /hartrees	ΔE <sup>a</sup> /kJ mol <sup>−1</sup>
Me	Exptl.	1.46, 1.46	1.91	1.97	1.80, 1.80, 1.79	−1323.14176	10.0 (7.5)
	Theory	1.44, 1.44	1.89	2.03	1.82, 1.82, 1.82	−1323.14556	
Et	Exptl.	1.46, 1.46	1.93	2.01	1.82, 1.82, 1.82	−1440.23448	16.7 (11.3)
	Theory	1.44, 1.44	1.89	2.04	1.84, 1.83, 1.84	−1440.24085	
Bu <sup>t</sup>	Exptl.	1.46, 1.47	1.91	2.05	1.90, 1.90, 1.91	−1674.38484	11.7 (6.7)
	Theory	1.44, 1.44	1.91	2.08	1.92, 1.92, 1.93	−1674.38936	
Cy	Exptl.	1.47, 1.41	1.99	1.99	1.77, 1.87, 1.88	−1905.12893	87.4 (46.0)
	Theory	1.44, 1.44	1.91	2.05	1.86, 1.86, 1.87	−1905.16231	

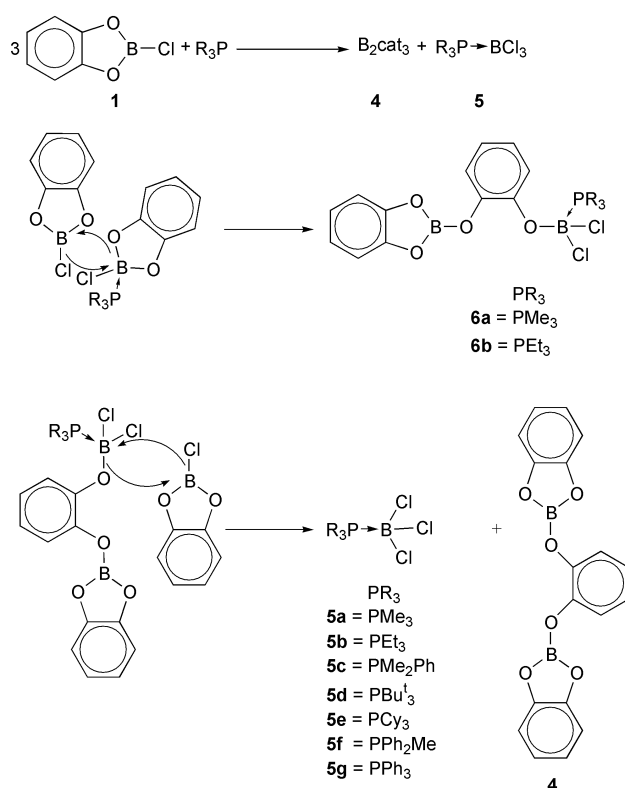
<sup>a</sup> Values (× 10<sup>−3</sup>) in parentheses are generated by ΔE/E(theory) for a more realistic comparison.

quite different from the others. Compared to the analogous bond distances found in **3a**, **3b** and **3d**, the most obvious differences in the geometry of **3e** are the B–O(2) bond, shortened by 0.05 Å to 1.408(2) Å, the B–Cl bond, lengthened by 0.06 Å to 1.995(2) Å, and the P–B bond length of 1.991(2) Å being shorter than all but that in **3a**. Additionally, P–C(20), at 1.768(2) Å, is over 0.1 Å shorter than P–C(10), at 1.884(2) Å, and P–C(30), at 1.870(2) Å. There is also further distortion throughout the catechol group, most significantly C(2)–O(2) and C(1)–C(2) when compared to values obtained from the other adducts, and the boron is further ‘tipped’ out of the plane of the catechol group by 0.25 Å.

In an attempt to understand why **3e** has a distorted molecular structure in the solid state relative to the other adducts, geometry optimisations (at the HF/6-31G\* level with Gaussian 94<sup>53</sup>) from the X-ray structural data of all four adducts were carried out. Table 3 contains selected bond lengths of experimental and optimised ‘gas-phase’ geometries for these adducts, and these values show very good agreement in all cases except **3e**. Energy differences between experimental (with their hydrogens optimised as they are not located accurately by X-ray crystallography) and optimised geometries in these adducts reveal a relatively large value of 87 kJ mol<sup>−1</sup> for **3e** compared with much smaller values of *ca.* 10–17 kJ mol<sup>−1</sup> for **3a**, **3b** and **3d**. Even allowing for the fact that the total energy of **3e** is larger than those of the other adducts, the energy difference for **3e** is substantial. We find no obvious intramolecular reasons for the distortions observed for **3e** in the solid state.

Crystal packing forces must therefore account for a large part of the distortion and the associated energy difference computed theoretically between the optimised and observed geometries. Examination of the crystal structure of **3e** revealed close Cl⋯H intermolecular distances of 2.9 Å involving cyclohexyl hydrogens. A Cambridge Structural Database Search<sup>54</sup> for B–Cl⋯H–C interactions gave an average distance of 3.4 Å from 166 compounds, very few being shorter than 2.9 Å. Thus, intermolecular packing forces appear to be responsible for the observed differences in the molecular structure in the crystal of the PCy<sub>3</sub> adduct compared to its optimised ‘gas-phase’ geometry. The experimental solid state structures of the other adducts are largely unaffected by packing forces, as they correspond very well with their optimised ‘gas-phase’ geometries, obtained from the *ab initio* molecular orbital calculations.

The 1 : 1 reactions of **1** with the phosphines PPh<sub>2</sub>Me and PPh<sub>3</sub> both yielded the redistribution products B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>, **4** and R<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub>, **5f** and **5g**, as shown in Scheme 3. The reactions were not instantaneous, however, and the <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectrum of each, when taken after 1 h, showed B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>, a doublet due to **5f** or **5g**, and another peak due to unreacted **1**. This peak was shifted by *ca.* 0.5 ppm to lower frequency from the expected position of free **1**, most likely indicating a very weak interaction between phosphine and **1**. When left for 24 h, the <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra showed only peaks due to B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>, **4** and **5f** or **5g**. In these two cases, it seems likely that R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat adducts do form but that the interactions are very weak due predominantly



**Scheme 3** Equation and proposed mechanism for boron substituent redistribution of R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat in the presence of an excess of ClBcat.

to low phosphine basicity (PPh<sub>2</sub>Me, pK<sub>a</sub> = 4.57, PPh<sub>3</sub>, pK<sub>a</sub> = 2.73), and the large cone angle (PPh<sub>2</sub>Me = 136°, PPh<sub>3</sub> = 145°).

Interestingly, even for those R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat adducts that were isolated, boron substituent redistribution took place over a period of several weeks in the solid state at −30 °C. It is clear, therefore, that the thermodynamic products are **4** and R<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub>, with the phosphine adducts of **1** being only kinetically stable. The mechanism shown in Scheme 3 is proposed for the redistribution reaction. In this mechanism, a molecule of **1** with coordinated phosphine reacts with an uncoordinated molecule of **1**, first forming an intermediate, **6**, which then reacts with a further uncoordinated molecule of **1** to form **4** and the R<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub> adduct **5**.

This mechanism is based on the fact that once a phosphine is bound to ClBcat, the oxygen atoms, having lost the ability to π-bond to boron, become nucleophilic. Attack at the electrophilic boron of an uncoordinated ClBcat leads to ring opening of the original BO<sub>2</sub> moiety and subsequent transfer of a Cl<sup>−</sup> between the two boron centres. Note that the electrophilic attack of ClBcat on an oxygen of the R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat adduct with ring opening is analogous to the known ability of ClBcat to cleave C–O bonds in ethers.<sup>55</sup>

As the mechanism depends on there being an excess of **1** with respect to PR<sub>3</sub>, we presumed that the reaction of all of the

phosphines with an excess of **1** would cause the redistribution to take place. In order to investigate this, each of the phosphines was reacted with a five-fold excess of **1**. The reactions were monitored by *in situ*  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectroscopy and all showed peaks due to **1** and **4**, and doublets due to **5a–g**. Additionally, 1 h after treatment of ClBcat with  $\text{PMe}_3$  and  $\text{PEt}_3$ , doublets were observed at  $\delta$  4.0 ( $J_{\text{B-P}} = 183$  Hz) and  $\delta$  4.1 ( $J_{\text{B-P}} = 175$  Hz) respectively. We believe that these additional low frequency resonances, which disappear after 24 h, may be due to the four-coordinate boron intermediates **6a** and **6b**, shown in Scheme 3. The resonance for the three-coordinate boron is likely to be superimposed on that for  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$ . The enhanced stability for such a species as an intermediate for  $\text{PMe}_3$  and  $\text{PEt}_3$  may be due to the smaller size of these phosphines.

Since the boron substituent redistribution yields  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$ , we postulated that the complicated  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectrum obtained for the reaction of **1** with  $\text{PCy}_3$  was the result of some interaction between  $\text{PCy}_3$  and  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$ . Six reactions were conducted between  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$  and 0.1, 1, and 2 equivalents of either  $\text{PEt}_3$  or  $\text{PCy}_3$ . The *in situ*  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra of the reactions using  $\text{PEt}_3$  showed a shift of approximately 2 ppm to lower frequency from the expected position of free **4**, indicating that some interaction between  $\text{PEt}_3$  and **4** is taking place. This is confirmed by the  $^{31}\text{P}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra, which show broad singlets shifted by *ca.* 20 ppm to higher frequency from the position of free  $\text{PEt}_3$ . The NMR spectra of the reactions with  $\text{PCy}_3$ , however, clearly show that a reaction is taking place. The  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra show the formation of a sharp peak at  $\delta$  15.0, consistent with the  $[\text{Bcat}_2]^-$  anion, a sharp peak at  $\delta$  -14.8, and also other, as yet unassigned peaks, which are consistent with those observed for the reaction between  $\text{PCy}_3$  and **4**. Removal of the solvent from the 2 : 1  $\text{PCy}_3$  :  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$  reaction followed by recrystallisation yielded single crystals, the X-ray diffraction analysis of which, though there was disorder, clearly showed the  $[\text{Bcat}_2]^-$  anion and the  $[\text{HPCy}_3]^+$  phosphonium cation.<sup>56</sup> No other products were isolated from any of the reactions with  $\text{PCy}_3$ . The behaviour of  $\text{PCy}_3$  is unique both in terms of reactivity and structure of the ClBcat adduct; the reasons for this are still elusive. However, it would appear that  $\text{PCy}_3$  is sufficiently nucleophilic to displace  $[\text{Bcat}_2]^-$  from  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$ .

To investigate the effect of nitrogen  $\sigma$ -donors, reactions of **1** with triethylamine, pyridine, 2-picoline and 4-picoline were carried out. The *in situ*  $^{11}\text{B}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra all showed broad peaks, shifted to lower frequency from the position of free **1**. The reactions all proceed cleanly, and no evidence of any decomposition was observed. Isolation of the pyridine and picoline adducts as solids proved difficult, as they tend to form oils, but removal of the solvent from the reaction with triethylamine and recrystallisation yielded single crystals of  $\text{Et}_3\text{N}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$  **3h** suitable for X-ray structural analysis.

The molecular structure of **3h** (Fig. 10) shows a B–Cl bond length of 1.876(1) Å which is shorter than the B–Cl bond lengths in any of the phosphine adducts, the shortest of which is 1.911(2) Å in **3a**. This is most probably due to a combination of the smaller size of nitrogen *vs.* phosphorus, reducing steric interactions, and the larger electronegativity of nitrogen. The B–N bond of 1.643(1) Å is considerably shorter than the B–P bond lengths in any of the adducts, as expected, again due to the smaller size of nitrogen.

In the case of **3h**, NMR analysis of the adduct kept both in solution and in the solid state showed no redistribution to  $\text{Et}_3\text{N}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$  and **4**, so this adduct appears to be thermally stable.

## Conclusion

Phosphine adducts of ClBcat can be isolated only if the phosphine is of sufficient basicity, the less basic phosphines used causing the rapid redistribution of ClBcat to  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$  and the  $\text{R}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$  adduct. The redistribution depends on there being

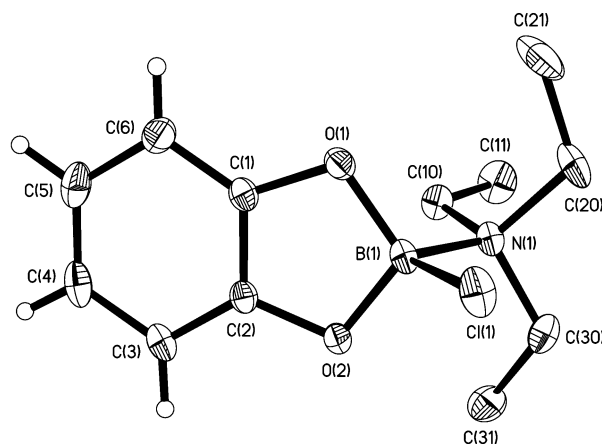


Fig. 10 Structure of  $\text{Et}_3\text{N}\cdot\text{ClBcat}$  **3h**. Hydrogens on the Et groups omitted for clarity.

free **1** in solution. The less associated adducts derived from the less basic phosphines provide a larger concentration of **1** through dissociation leading to more rapid redistribution. Even those phosphine adducts that were observed or isolated were only kinetically stable, as redistribution took place slowly even in the solid state at  $-30^\circ\text{C}$ . In the case of  $\text{PCy}_3$ , the phosphine reacts with the  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$  formed by the redistribution reaction. The presence of an excess of ClBcat relative to any of the phosphines causes the rapid boron substituent redistribution.

The nitrogen  $\sigma$ -donors formed stable adducts with ClBcat with no redistribution observed, either in the solid state or in solution, over an extended period of time.

Oxidative addition of ClBcat to low-valent, late transition metal phosphine complexes is known.<sup>46</sup> However, if labile phosphine ligands are employed in a catalytic process, reaction according to Scheme 3 is to be expected. This may, in fact, be valuable, in so far as it would inhibit re-coordination of the phosphine to the metal centre, with  $\text{BCl}_3$  serving as an *in situ* phosphine sponge. It will be important to show that  $\text{B}_2\text{cat}_3$  and  $\text{R}_3\text{P}\cdot\text{BCl}_3$  will not otherwise interfere with any catalytic process.

Strong binding of amine bases to ClBcat may serve to inhibit phosphine-promoted redistribution reactions. Examination of the oxidative addition of the B–Cl bond in amine adducts such as **3h** to low-valent late transition metals will be the basis for subsequent reports.

## Experimental

Air-sensitive compounds were manipulated in a nitrogen atmosphere using Schlenk techniques or in Innovative Technology, Inc. System 1 glove boxes. NMR spectra (at room temperature except where stated) were recorded on Bruker AC 200 ( $^{13}\text{C}$ ), Varian Mercury 200 ( $^1\text{H}$ ,  $^{31}\text{P}$ ), Varian Unity 300 ( $^1\text{H}$ ,  $^{11}\text{B}$ ) and Varian Unity Inova 500 ( $^{11}\text{B}$  and VT  $^{11}\text{B}$ ) instruments. Variable temperature  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR experiments were conducted on a Varian VXR-400 instrument. Proton and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectra were referenced to external  $\text{SiMe}_4$  *via* residual protons in the deuterated solvents or solvent resonances respectively;  $^{11}\text{B}$  and  $^{31}\text{P}$  shifts were referenced to external  $\text{BF}_3\cdot\text{OEt}_2$  and 85%  $\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4$ , respectively. Elemental analyses were conducted in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Durham using an Exeter Analytical Inc. CE-440 Elemental Analyzer. Toluene was dried and deoxygenated by passage through columns of activated alumina and BASF-R311 catalyst under argon pressure using a modified version of the Innovative Technology Inc. SPS-400 solvent purification system.<sup>57</sup> Chloroform and  $\text{CDCl}_3$  were dried over calcium hydride,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$  was dried over potassium metal, and all were distilled under nitrogen. The B-chlorocatechol borane (Aldrich) was sublimed under vacuum before use. Phosphines were purchased from Aldrich or Strem Chemicals Inc. and were checked for purity by  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{31}\text{P}\{^1\text{H}\}$

NMR spectroscopy before use. Triethylamine, pyridine and 2- and 4-picoline were purchased from Lancaster and were distilled from calcium hydride.

### Preparation of Me<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat 3a

A solution of PMe<sub>3</sub> (0.030 g, 0.389 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a solution of ClBcat (0.061 g, 0.389 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) and the mixture was stirred for 1 h. The solvent was removed *in vacuo* to yield 0.081 g of a white powder. The product was recrystallised from a minimum amount of toluene to yield 0.078 g (87%) of a white, crystalline solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 6.79 (m, 4H, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 1.51 (d, 9H, P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>H-P</sub> = 11 Hz); <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 11.1 (s); (at –40 °C): δ 11.0 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 178 Hz); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ –27.9 (s); (at –40 °C): δ –24.9 (q, J<sub>P-B</sub> = 175 Hz); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 150.5 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 119.9 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 110.3 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 9.4 (s, br, P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>) (Found: C, 46.89; H, 5.78. C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>13</sub>O<sub>2</sub>ClBP requires C, 46.91; H, 5.69%).

### Preparation of Et<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat 3b

As for **3a** using PEt<sub>3</sub> (0.038 g, 0.324 mmol) and ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol). Yield 0.068 g (78%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 6.78 (m, 4H, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 1.89 (dq, 6H, P(CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>H-P</sub> = 11 Hz, J<sub>H-H</sub> = 8 Hz), 1.22 (dt, 9H, P(CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>H-P</sub> = 16 Hz, J<sub>H-H</sub> = 8 Hz); <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 11.4 (s); (at –40 °C): δ 11.3 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 167 Hz); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 1.4 (s); (at –40 °C): δ 6.8 (q, J<sub>P-B</sub> = 169 Hz); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 150.2 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 119.8 (s, 1,2-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 110.3 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 10.5 (d, P(CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>C-P</sub> = 34 Hz), 6.4 (d, P(CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>C-P</sub> = 5 Hz) (Found: C, 52.60; H, 7.09. C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>19</sub>O<sub>2</sub>ClBP requires C, 52.89; H, 7.03%).

### Preparation of Me<sub>2</sub>PhP·ClBcat 3c

As for **3a** using PMe<sub>2</sub>Ph (0.045 g, 0.324 mmol) and ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol). Yield 0.075 g (79%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.65 (m, 2H, PMe<sub>2</sub>(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)), 7.46 (m, 3H, PMe<sub>2</sub>(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)), 6.83 (m, 2H, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), δ 6.74 (m, 2H, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>) δ 1.51 (d, 6H, P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>Ph, J<sub>P-H</sub> = 9 Hz); <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 11.8 (s); (at –40 °C): δ 11.6 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 166 Hz); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ –29.8 (s), (at –40 °C): δ –22.8 (q, J<sub>P-B</sub> = 166 Hz); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 150.5 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 131.5 (s, P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>Ph), 131.1 (d, P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), J<sub>C-P</sub> = 11 Hz), 129.1 (d, P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), J<sub>C-P</sub> = 11 Hz), 120.0 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 110.4 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 7.9 (d, P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>Ph, J<sub>C-P</sub> = 29 Hz), the resonances of the *ipso* carbon of P(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>) were not observed (Found: C, 57.27; H, 5.39. C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>15</sub>O<sub>2</sub>ClBP requires C, 57.49; H, 5.17%).

### Preparation of Bu<sup>t</sup><sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat 3d

As for **3a** using PBu<sup>t</sup><sub>3</sub> (0.066 g, 0.324 mmol) and ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol). The product was recrystallised from toluene layered with hexane to yield 0.095 g (82%) of a crystalline white solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 6.87 (m, 4H, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 1.29 (d, 27H, P(C(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>H-P</sub> = 11 Hz); (at –40 °C): δ 1.65 (d, J<sub>H-P</sub> = 15 Hz); <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 15.8 (s); (at –40 °C): δ 12.1 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 158 Hz); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 25.5 (s); (at –40 °C): δ 15.3 (q, J<sub>P-B</sub> = 160 Hz); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 120.3 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 110.8 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 36.9 (d, P(C(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>C-P</sub> = 27 Hz), 30.1 (s, P(C(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), the resonances of C1 and C2 of 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub> were not observed) (Found: C, 60.34; H, 8.78. C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>31</sub>O<sub>2</sub>ClBP requires C, 60.61; H, 8.76%).

### Reaction of ClBcat with PCy<sub>3</sub>

A solution of PCy<sub>3</sub> (0.091 g, 0.321 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a solution of ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.321 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) and the mixture was stirred for 1 h, by which time a white precipitate had formed. The precipitate was collected by

filtration and was recrystallised from toluene layered with hexane to yield a white solid (0.129 g). <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 23.4 (B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>), 21.4, 12.1 (Cy<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat), 11.1, 3.7 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 147 Hz, Cy<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub>); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ –3.3 (Cy<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat).

### Synthesis of Cy<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat 3e

A 2 mol% excess of PCy<sub>3</sub> (0.093 g, 0.330 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a solution of ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>), giving a white precipitate which was collected by filtration and recrystallised from toluene layered with hexane, yielding white crystals (0.038 g) from which the single crystal for X-ray analysis was obtained. <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 22.2, 12.2 (Cy<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat); (at –40 °C): δ 11.8 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 160 Hz); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ –3.3 (Cy<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat); (at –40 °C): δ –6.6, (q, J<sub>P-B</sub> = 159 Hz); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 149.8 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 119.8 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 110.4 (s, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 30.1 (d, P(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>11</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>C-P</sub> = 26 Hz), 28.0 (s, P(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>11</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 27.2 (d, P(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>11</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>C-P</sub> = 11 Hz), 25.8 (s, P(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>11</sub>)<sub>3</sub>).

### Reaction of ClBcat with PPh<sub>2</sub>Me

A solution of ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a solution of PPh<sub>2</sub>Me (0.065 g, 0.324 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) which was then stirred for 1 h. Removal of solvent yielded a white precipitate (0.094 g). <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 27.9 (Ph<sub>2</sub>MeP·ClBcat), 23.2 (B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>), 4.3 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 153 Hz, Ph<sub>2</sub>MeP·BCl<sub>3</sub>); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ –7.3 (q, J<sub>P-B</sub> = 155 Hz, Ph<sub>2</sub>MeP·BCl<sub>3</sub>).

### Reaction of ClBcat with PPh<sub>3</sub>

A solution of ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added to a solution of PPh<sub>3</sub> (0.084 g, 0.324 mmol) in toluene (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) which was then stirred for 1 h. Removal of solvent yielded a white precipitate (0.118 g). <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 27.9 (s, Ph<sub>3</sub>P·ClBcat), 23.1 (br s, B<sub>2</sub>cat<sub>3</sub>), 4.4 (d, J<sub>B-P</sub> = 152 Hz, Ph<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub>); <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (PhMe–10% C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>): δ 2.0 (q, J<sub>P-B</sub> = 152 Hz, Ph<sub>3</sub>P·BCl<sub>3</sub>).

### Preparation of Et<sub>3</sub>N·ClBcat 3h

A solution of NEt<sub>3</sub> (0.033 g, 0.324 mmol) in CHCl<sub>3</sub> (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was reacted with ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol) in CHCl<sub>3</sub> (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) and the mixture was stirred for 1 h. The solvent was removed *in vacuo* leaving a white powder which was recrystallised from a minimum amount of CHCl<sub>3</sub> to yield 0.072 g (87%) of a crystalline white solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 6.89 (m, 4H, 1,2-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>), 2.56 (q, 6H, N(CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>H-H</sub> = 8 Hz), 0.71 (t, 9H, N(CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, J<sub>H-H</sub> = 8 Hz); <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 13.3 (s) (Found: C, 56.69; H, 7.59; N, 5.56. C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>19</sub>BCINO<sub>2</sub> requires C, 56.40; H, 7.49, N, 5.48%).

### Preparation of C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub>N·ClBcat

A solution of C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub>N (0.025 g, 0.324 mmol) in CHCl<sub>3</sub> (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) was reacted with ClBcat (0.050 g, 0.324 mmol) in CHCl<sub>3</sub> (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) and the mixture was stirred for 1 h. <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (*in situ* CHCl<sub>3</sub>–CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 11.8 (C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub>N·ClBcat).

### Preparation of 2-MeC<sub>5</sub>H<sub>4</sub>N·ClBcat

As for C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub>N·ClBcat using 2-MeC<sub>5</sub>H<sub>4</sub>N (0.030 g, 0.324 mmol) in CHCl<sub>3</sub> (1 cm<sup>3</sup>). <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (*in situ* CHCl<sub>3</sub>–CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 11.7 (2-MeC<sub>5</sub>H<sub>4</sub>N·ClBcat).

### Preparation of 4-MeC<sub>5</sub>H<sub>4</sub>N·ClBcat

As for C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub>N·ClBcat using 4-MeC<sub>5</sub>H<sub>4</sub>N (0.030 g, 0.324 mmol) in CHCl<sub>3</sub> (1 cm<sup>3</sup>). <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (*in situ* CHCl<sub>3</sub>–CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 11.7 (4-MeC<sub>5</sub>H<sub>4</sub>N·ClBcat).

**Table 4** Crystal data and structure refinement for ClBCat, BrBCat and the R<sub>3</sub>P and Et<sub>3</sub>N adducts of ClBCat

	ClBCat <b>1</b>	BrBCat <b>2</b>	Me <sub>3</sub> P·ClBCat <b>3a</b>	Et <sub>3</sub> P·ClBCat <b>3b</b>	Bu <sup>t</sup> <sub>3</sub> P·ClBCat <b>3d</b>	Cy <sub>3</sub> P·ClBCat <b>3e</b>	Et <sub>3</sub> N·ClBCat <b>3h</b>
Formula	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> BClO <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> BBro <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>9</sub> H <sub>13</sub> BClO <sub>2</sub> P	C <sub>12</sub> H <sub>19</sub> BClO <sub>2</sub> P	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>31</sub> BClO <sub>2</sub> P	C <sub>24</sub> H <sub>37</sub> BClO <sub>2</sub> P	C <sub>12</sub> H <sub>19</sub> BClO <sub>2</sub> N
<i>M</i>	154.35	198.81	230.42	272.50	356.66	434.77	255.54
<i>T</i> /K	120(2)	120(2)	160(2)	200(2)	120(2)	150(2)	100(2)
Crystal system	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	Orthorhombic	Orthorhombic	Monoclinic	Orthorhombic
Space group	<i>C2/c</i>	<i>C2/c</i>	<i>P2<sub>1</sub>/c</i>	<i>Pbca</i>	<i>Pna2<sub>1</sub></i>	<i>P2<sub>1</sub>/n</i>	<i>P2<sub>1</sub>2<sub>1</sub>2<sub>1</sub></i>
<i>a</i> /Å	10.5584(8)	10.7250(4)	12.2244(10)	13.4416(12)	16.664(1)	11.541(2)	6.6037(3)
<i>b</i> /Å	9.8180(8)	10.0682(4)	16.3667(14)	14.0419(12)	13.455(5)	13.426(3)	13.3458(7)
<i>c</i> /Å	7.1370(5)	7.2078(3)	12.7944(11)	14.6040(12)	8.546(1)	15.070(3)	15.0557(7)
$\beta$ /°	118.75(1)	119.53(1)	117.195(2)	90	90	92.226(3)	90
<i>U</i> /Å <sup>3</sup>	648.62(9)	677.2(2)	2276.8(3)	2756.4(4)	1916.1(8)	2333.3(8)	1326.88(11)
<i>Z</i>	4	4	8	8	4	4	4
$\mu$ /mm <sup>-1</sup>	0.506	5.992	0.447	0.380	0.289	0.250	0.277
Reflections measured	2888	3032	14114	27702	14595	28034	15865
Unique reflections	753	914	5258	3169	4570	6574	3762
<i>R</i> <sub>int</sub>	0.0319	0.0250	0.0349	0.1318	0.0242	0.0403	0.0152
<i>wR</i> <sub>2</sub> (all data, on <i>F</i> <sup>2</sup> )	0.0950	0.0637	0.0842	0.1059	0.0598	0.1055	0.0640
<i>R</i> [data with <i>F</i> <sup>2</sup> > 2σ( <i>F</i> <sup>2</sup> )]	0.0345	0.0243	0.0317	0.0393	0.0257	0.0395	0.0234

### Computational study

*Ab initio* computations on R<sub>3</sub>P·ClBCat adducts were carried out with the Gaussian 94 package.<sup>53</sup> The experimental geometries were fully optimised initially at the HF/3-21G level and then at the HF/6-31G\* level with no symmetry constraints. Frequency calculations were computed on these optimised geometries at the HF/6-31G\* level and no imaginary frequencies were found. For single point energies of the experimental geometries in Table 3, the hydrogens were first optimised at the HF/6-31G\* level.

### Crystallography

X-Ray diffraction experiments were carried out on a Bruker SMART three-circle diffractometer with a 1K CCD area detector, using graphite-monochromated Mo-*K*α radiation ( $\lambda = 0.71073$  Å) and a Cryostream (Oxford Cryosystems) open-flow N<sub>2</sub> gas cryostat. At least a hemisphere of data was collected in each case. Semi-empirical absorption corrections, by comparison of Laue equivalents, were applied (except for **3b**) using SADABS or XPREP programs.<sup>58,59</sup> The structures were solved by direct methods and refined by full-matrix least squares against *F*<sup>2</sup> of all data, using SHELXTL software.<sup>59</sup> All non-H atoms were refined in anisotropic, H atoms in isotropic approximation. Compound **3a** crystallised with two independent molecules in the asymmetric unit which differ little in their geometries. Crystal data and experimental details are summarised in Table 4.

CCDC reference numbers 154920–154926.

See <http://www.rsc.org/suppdata/dt/b0/b010025k/> for crystallographic data in CIF or other electronic format.

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