A facile single crystal to single crystal transition with significant structural contraction on desolvation†

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The compound [Pb(ebdc)(MeOH)]_2H_2O (1) crystallises in the monoclinic space group P2_1/a and has an asymmetric unit that contains a divalent lead centre coordinated to a single 5-ethyl-1,3-benzenedicarboxylate (ebdc) ligand, and a molecule of methanol. The ebdc ligand chelates to the lead(II) centre via one carboxylate group in a μ-κ_2O_4' manner, and bridges via the second carboxylate in a μ-κOxO' fashion to two symmetry generated (−x + 1/2, y, −z + 1) and (x − 1, y, z) lead(II) atoms. Accounting for symmetry, the lead(II) atom possesses five primary bonds (<2.75 Å) the sum of which yield a 1D ladder network that propagates along the crystallographic a axis. There are two additional secondary interactions within the limits of van der Waals' interactions for lead and oxygen (2.75 < 3.30 Å), O(3')-Pb(1): 2.876(6) and O(4')-Pb(1): 2.837(5) Å. Taken into account, these weaker interactions give a 2D network (Fig. 1). We believe the distinction between secondary interactions and primary bonds is important, as the making or breaking of these bonds appears to facilitate the SCSC process (vide infra).†

Alignment of the ethynyl groups along the network provides ordering in the solid state by interdigitation, such that opposing ladders associate in a zipper-like fashion. Weak hydrogen bonding deriving from the ethynyl groups was observed, and protonation of

† Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available: Details of experimental methods, tables of bond lengths and angles, PXRD patterns for 1−3, and TGA analysis of 1. CCDC 1007986−1007988. For ESI and crystallographic data in CIF or other electronic format see DOI: 10.1039/c4cc06587e

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Fig. 1  Coordination environment of 1. Secondary interactions are represented as yellow dashed lines. Hydrogen atoms and water molecules have been omitted for clarity. Unit cell: a = 10.037(2) Å, b = 17.698(4) Å, c = 12.687(3) Å, β = 96.75(3)°.
the group was confirmed by the C–H ethynyl band at 3240 cm\(^{-1}\) in the IR spectrum.

Lattice water molecules sit between adjacent chains of 1 acting as bifurcated hydrogen bond acceptors from two coordinated methanol molecules (O(5)·O(6); 2.725(10) Å), and donors to two carboxylate moieties (O(6)·O(2); 2.749(8) Å). These hydrogen bonding regions separate interdigitated pairs of ladders ordering the structure (Fig. 2).

Exposing a crystalline powder of 1 to air over the course of several hours resulted in conversion to a second species, \([\text{Pb(ebdc)}]\) (shown in blue). Also highlighted are weaker secondary Pb–O interactions (shown in yellow).

Loss of solvated regions of the crystal, viewed here down the crystallographic \(a\) axis of 1 and \(b\) axis of 2, cause the 1D ladders to compress, reducing this axis by 20%. Blue dashed lines: hydrogen bonds; yellow dashed lines: secondary Pb–O interactions.
1362 cm\(^{-1}\) correspond to respective carboxylate antisymmetric and symmetric COO\(^-\) stretches. Transformation to desolvated form 2 sees the disappearance of the alcoholic bands, as well as a blue shift of the antisymmetric carboxylate stretching mode to 1516 cm\(^{-1}\) and a red shift in the symmetric stretching mode to 1343 cm\(^{-1}\), which are likely associated with formation of the new primary Pb(1)--O(7) bond and loss of the hydrogen bond originated from the lattice water molecule in 1. These changes occur at a single carboxylate group, which contains O(1) and O(2) in Fig. 1 and 3. The crystalline sample required 45 minutes to completely convert to the desolvated form as gauged by IR spectroscopy, a result that was supported by X-ray powder diffraction measurements.

The facile nature of the transition from 1 to 2 prompted further investigation of the behaviour within the solvent channels of 1. Immersing crystals of 1 in ethanol for several days yielded a second SCSC transition to an ethanol adduct, \([\text{Pb}_2(\text{ebdc})_2(\text{EtOH})]_2\text{H}_2\text{O}\) (3). Crystallographic analysis of 3 revealed the new crystal retains monoclinic symmetry with conversion to the \(\text{I}2\text{\text{\text{\text{2}}}2}\) space group. Two crystallographically unique lead atoms and two ebdc ligands are present in the asymmetric unit, with a single ethanol molecule coordinating to Pb(1). Network 3 differs from 1 in terms of degree of solvation within the pore, and by substitution of a secondary interaction for a primary bond, which gives a 2D network motif comprised of primary bonds (Fig. 5). Replacement of coordinated methanol with a larger ethanol molecule serves to sterically displace all solvent excepting a water molecule, yielding a system with only half the hydrogen bonding interactions propagating along the crystallographic \(b\) axis as observed in 1 (Fig. 6). The single lattice water molecule again acts as a bifurcated hydroxon bond acceptor from a pair of coordinated ethanol molecules (O(9)--O(10): 2.732(12) Å), and donor to two carboxylate moieties (O(10)--O(8): 2.756(11) Å). The shortening of the secondary interaction between Pb and O(4) from 2.837(5) Å in 1, to 2.623(10) Å in 3, is likely a result of a small slip of the chains aligned to the crystallographic \(c\) axis, which allows the ethanol molecules to reorient and hydrogen bond to the lattice water molecule. The length of the crystallographic \(b\) axis for 3 remains equivalent to 1 at 17.7 Å. The conversion of 1 to 3 was found to be irreversible, and furthermore the presence of EtOH inhibits the SCSC transition of 3 to desolvated form 2 at room temperature. Heating a powder sample of 3 at 100 °C for 1 hour effected transformation to an amorphous compound that was identified as compound 2 using infrared spectroscopy. It is likely that the 2D network, which is comprised of primary bonds only in 3, provides greater stability to the hydrogen bonded solvent within the terminal alkyne bordered channels and inhibits the SCSC transition at low temperature. The transition in crystal forms derived from 1 is summarized in Scheme 1.

The structures of 1–3 differ from the known lead-1,3-benzenedicarboxylate (mbdc) structures,\(^{18}\) which consist of three-dimensional networks. Steric effects relating to the presence of the ethynyl group in ebdc prevents the compounds formed from this ligand being isostructural to those with mbdc. The crystal data for compounds 1–3, as well as full tables of bond lengths and angles for each network, can be found in the ESI† (Tables S4 and S5).

We have identified an unusual SCSC system that undergoes large changes to crystalline topology and packing, and yet occurs via facile desolvation at room temperature, despite the requirement for coordinated solvent loss. Ease of transformation from a solvated (1 and 3) to the desolvated form (2) was found to be influenced by the nature of the Pb–O interactions. In compound 1 weak secondary interactions dominate, allowing facile slippage of the 1D chains to yield primary interactions in 2 that possess greater stability. By contrast, additional primary Pb–O interactions are present in compound 3, inhibiting this mechanism and necessitating heating to liberate the solvent and yield 2.

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Notes and references

‡ Crystal data from single crystal diffraction studies for 1. \(\text{C}_9\text{H}_4\text{O}_4\text{Pb}_3\), \(M_1 = 872.74\), monoclinic, space group \(\text{I}2\text{\text{\text{\text{2}}}2}\), \(a = 10.037(2)\), \(b = 17.698(4)\), \(c = 12.687(3)\), \(\beta = 96.75(3)\), \(V = 2238.1(3)\) \(\text{Å}^3\), \(Z = 4\), \(\rho_{\text{calc}} = 2.590\) g \(\text{cm}^{-3}\).
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