Probing the design rules for optimizing electron spin relaxation in densely packed triplet media for quantum applications

Max Attwood¹*, Yingxu Li¹, Irena Nevjestic¹, Phil Diggle¹, Alberto Collauto², Muskaan Betala¹, Andrew J. P. White2, Mark Oxborrow¹

1/ Department of Materials and London Centre for Nanotechnology, Imperial College London, South Kensington Campus, Exhibition Road, SW7 2AZ, London, UK

2/ Department of Chemistry and Centre for Pulse EPR spectroscopy, Imperial College London, Molecular Sciences Research Hub, W12 0BZ, London, UK

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Experimental Details

UV/Vis spectroscopy of the acetylanthracenes was performed using a sealed 1 cm quartz cuvette filled with samples diluted in chloroform to 10⁻⁵ M. Co-crystals were too optically dense to measure directly, hence spectra were measured using drop cast films on 1 cm^2 glass substrates. The feedstock solutions were diluted to 10-4 M and 100 μl was deposited on a glass and allowed to evaporate in air. Data was measured using an Agilent Cary 5000 UV/Vis/NIR spectrophotometer. Fluorescence emission spectroscopy was performed using a Horiba Jobin-Yvon Spex Fluorolog-3 fluorimeter, with emission and excitation slit widths set to 2 nm.

Diffraction data for crystals of **Anthracene:TCNB**, **1-AAN**, **1-AAN:TCNB** and **1,5-DAAN:TCNB** were collected using Agilent Xcalibur 3 E (**Anthracene:TCNB** and **1,5-DAAN:TCNB**) and Agilent Xcalibur PX Ultra A (**1-AAN** and **1-AAN:TCNB**) diffractometers using Mo-Kα and Cu-Kα radiation respectively, and the structures were solved and refined using the OLEX2, 1 SHELXTL47 and SHELX-2013^{2,3} program systems. CCDC 2313864 to 2313866 and 2347419.

Time-resolved EPR spectroscopy was performed using a Bruker ELEXSYS-II E500T spectrometer (X-band) equipped with Bruker ER4118X-MD-5W resonator and coupled with 20 Hz Q-switched Nd:YAG laser (Spectra-Physics INDI-HG-20S) pumped broadband OPO (GWU, primoScan/ULD 120). Measurements were performed at room temperature at 450 nm (for **1,5-DAAN:TCNB**) or 500 nm (for **Anthracene:TCNB**, **1- AAN:TCNB** and **9-AAN:TCNB**) with ~5mJ laser pulse energy (pulse length 5-7 ns). Crystals were initially ground into fine powders and decanted into a 4 mm O.D. Wilmad quartz (CFQ) EPR tube. The attenuation was set to 0.05 mW and required 1500 scans. The data was then exported and analyzed using the MATLAB EasySpin (V6.0.0 dev.51) work package (see ESI for details). 4

Pulse EPR experiments were performed on a Bruker Elexsys E580 spectrometer equipped with an ER 4118X-MD5 dielectric ring resonator (Bruker) and a 1 kW traveling-wave tube amplifier (Applied Systems Engineering Inc., Model 117X); a closed-circuit Helium cryostat with front optical access (Cryogenic Ltd.) was used to control the temperature of the resonator and of the sample. To enhance the sensitivity, the microwave resonator was installed on a cryogenic HEMT probehead (Amplify My Probe Ltd.) containing a 36 dB low-noise preamplifier (Low Noise Factory AB, model LNF-LNC4_16C) and a 6 dB directional coupler (Pasternack Enterprises, Inc.).⁵ The light pulses were generated using an Aurora II Integra laser (Litron Lasers Ltd., model A23-39-21) containing a Nd:YAG nanosecond pump source and a Type II BBO broadband OPO; the pulse length for this system is 5 – 7 ns with a repetition rate of 21 Hz. The emission wavelength was tuned to 500 nm and the output energy was reduced to $3.5 - 4.5$ mJ per pulse using an absorptive ND filter (Thorlabs Inc.). The sample was irradiated through the optical window of the cryostat (Spectrosil B fused silica). The pulse generation and EPR signal acquisition was triggered from the laser power supply unit. The trigger signal was delayed (delay after flash, DAF) in order to be at the maximum of the photo-induced transient signal; this calibration was performed using a sample of pentacene in 1,3,5-tri(1-naphtyl)benzene.51 Echo-detected field-swept EPR (EDFS-EPR) spectra were recorded using the pulse sequence *π/2 – τ – π – τ – echo* with a fixed inter-pulse delay τ = 200 ns; a 2-step phase cycle was applied to the π/2 pulse. The same pulse sequence was used to record Hahn echo decay traces upon increasing the inter-pulse delay τ from 200 ns; a 2-step phase cycle was applied to the $π/2$ pulse. Inversion recovery experiments were performed using the pulse sequence $\pi - T - \pi/2 - \tau - \pi - \tau$ *echo* with a 2-step phase cycle on the $\pi/2$ pulse; τ was set to 200 ns and T was incremented from 330 ns. For all the experiments the lengths of the $\pi/2$ and π pulses were set to 16 ns and 32, respectively, and the 2-pulse echo signal was integrated over a 100 ns window centered at the echo maximum. For each sample, the microwave power was optimised for maximum echo signal. To correct for the resonator background, for all the experiments traces with and without photoirradiation were recorded; the latter ones were then subtracted from the former ones.

Transient Fluorescence Spectroscopy

Transient fluorescence spectroscopy was obtained using a home-built setup as shown in **Fig. S1** below. The supercontinuum laser (NKT Photonics SuperK FIANIUM) was set to a repetition rate between 5 – 10 MHz. The light is directed to a 5x reflective beam expander and then translated to a custom monochromator for spectral selection. Spectral selection ensures that any wavelength between 400 and 700 nm has a bandwidth (FWHM) < 4 nm.

After spectral selection, the wavelength of light is directed towards a dichroic such that light is reflected towards a 10x microscope objective. The dichroic is a longpass filter such that the laser wavelength is reflected only in order to reject the excitation wavelength during spectroscopy.

The fluorescence is obtained by reflection and is therefore captured by the objective and directed towards the spectrometer (Andor Kymera 328i). The entrance slit to the spectrometer was set to 25 um, and spectroscopy was obtained using a 300 l/mm grating.

For data acquisition, the hybrid PMT (Becker & Hickl HPM-100-07) is connected to a streaming time-todigital converter (Swabian Instruments TimeTagger Ultra). Data was collected with a dwell time such that sufficient signal was collected for data fitting routines (see Table S1). The instrument response function (IRF) was measured to be < 0.1 ns. The decay histogram data was collected into 0.1 ns temporal bins.

Supercontinuum Monochromator

Figure S1: Schematic of the homebuilt hyperspectral microscope for transient fluorescence spectroscopy.

Table S1: Acquisition parameters for each sample.

Figure S2: Transient fluorescence spectra for (**a**) **1-AAN:TCNB**, (**b**) **1,5-DAAN:TCNB**, and (**c**) **9- AAN:TCNB**.

Synthesis Details

Synthesis of acetylanthracenes was performed using modified procedures from the literature.^{7,8}

1-AAN and **1,5-DAAN** were synthesized at room temperature in chloroform using an aluminium chloride (AlCl3) Lewis acid and acetyl chloride. The products were extracted with ethyl acetate, washed with 5% Na2CO3, and separated by column chromatography using 1:1 dichloromethane to petroleum ether as eluent. Their NMR in CDCl₃ spectra matched those in the literature.

9-AAN and **9,10-DAAN** were synthesised using an α -Fe₂O₃ catalyst which had been activated by heating to 200℃ for 3 days. A solution of anthracene and acetyl chloride was then added. The solution was stirred for an hour and then hydrolyzed using HCl or H2SO⁴ solutions. The products were extracted with ethyl acetate, washed with 5% Na2CO3, and separated by column chromatography using separated over silica gel using 5:1 ethyl acetate to petroleum ether.

9-acetylanthracene (**9-AAN**) assignments. 1H NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 8.48 (s, 1H), 8.03 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 1.7 Hz, 2H), 7.92 – 7.73 (dd, 2H), 7.65 – 7.39 (m, 2H), 2.81 (s, 3H). 13C NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 208.20, 136.83, 131.18, 128.91, 128.29, 126.86, 126.70, 125.58, 124.42, 33.94. ¹³C NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 128.91, 128.29, 126.86, 125.58, 124.42, 33.93.

9,10-diacetylanthracene (**9,10-DAAN**) assignments. 1H NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 7.85 (dd, *J* = 6.7, 3.2 Hz, 1H), 7.64 – 7.47 (m, 1H), 2.81 (s, 2H). ¹³C NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 207.63, 138.39, 127.66, 126.94, 126.09, 125.01, 33.97. ¹³C NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 126.93, 125.01, 33.96.

1-acetylanthracene (**1-AAN**) assignments. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 9.56 – 9.32 (m, 1H), 8.45 (s, 1H), 8.17 (dd, *J* = 8.5, 0.9 Hz, 1H), 8.11 – 8.03 (m, 1H), 8.00 (dd, *J* = 7.0, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 7.55 – 7.43 (m, 3H), 2.81 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 201.64, 134.03, 133.13, 132.05, 131.63, 129.74, 129.30, 127.85, 127.73, 127.01, 126.27, 126.10, 125.89, 123.54, 29.91. ¹³C NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 134.03, 129.73, 129.29, 127.85, 127.00, 126.26, 126.09, 125.88, 123.54, 29.90.

1,5-diacetylanthracene (**1,5-DAAN**) assignments. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 9.56 (s, 1H), 8.25 (dd, *J* = 8.4, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 8.08 (dd, *J* = 7.0, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (dd, *J* = 8.5, 7.0 Hz, 1H), 2.81 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (400 MHz, CHLOROFORM-*D*) δ 201.36, 135.29, 134.32, 133.49, 130.80, 127.83, 126.77, 124.25, 29.75.

Scheme S1. Overview of synthesis approach for different acetylanthracenes with yields of each material shown.

Figure S3. 1H-NMR (top), 13C (middle), DEPT (bottom) of 9-acetylanthracene (**9-AAN**).

Figure S4. 1H-NMR (top), 13C (middle), DEPT (bottom) of 9,10-diacetylanthracene (**9,10-DAAN**).

Figure S5. ¹H-NMR (top), 13C (middle), DEPT (bottom) of 1-acetylanthracene (**1-AAN**).

Figure S6. 1H-NMR (top), 13C (bottom) of 1,5-diacetylanthracene (1**,5-DAAN**).

EasySpin Fitting Details and Script

The least squares fitting of X-band triplet signals was performed using the "esfit" function inside the (V6.0.0 dev.51) package for MATLAB 2023a. The data was fitted with data "as is", and baseline "none", using the Nelder-Mead simplex algorithm. The following typical script used to load, and fit is given below (compatibility with EasySpin v6.0.0 dev.51):⁴

```
% Load in the Data
[B,spc, param] = eprload(['file_location.DTA']);
```
% Data Conversion – separation of real and imaginary data sets

 $spc_{real} = real(spc);$ $spc_$ imag = imag (spc) ;

% Background Correction - removal of laser noise by subtracting a time trace of a field position without sample-dependent signal

 $spc_{real_corr} = spc_{real}(:, :) - spc_{real}(:, 1);$ $Bmag = B{1,2}$; Btime = $B{1,1}$;

% Spin and experimental parameters $Sys = struct['S', 1, 'g', [2.001], 'lw', [0.5 0.5], 'D', [1900 200]);$ Sys.initState = {[0.1 0.8 0.1],'zerofield'}; $Exp = struct('mwFreq',param.MWFO*10^4-9,'Harmonic',0);$ Exp.Range = [273 423];

```
% Fitting Parameters
Vary = struct['lw'[2 2][g'[0.01][D'[350 100]);Vary.initState = \{[1\ 1\ 1], 'zerofield '};
```
% Least square fitting

esfit(spc_real_corr(50,:), @pepper, {Sys,Exp}, {Vary});

The signal maxima used for fitting were found by varying the time variable (#) and replotting the subsequent EPR trace:

figure(1) plot(Bmag(:), Mspc(#,:)); hold on

The optimum time index can be checked by examining a field position (#) with a strong signal and looking for the highest signal, using the following script:

% Moving Average for Signal vs. Time @ Peak Positions if required $MmagLF = movmean(spc_{real_ccorr(:,#), 5);$ % Low-field signal $MmagHF = movmean(spc_{real_corr(:,#), 5);$ % High-field signal

```
% Plotting time vs Signal
figure(2)
plot(Btime*1000, MmagLF, 'r');
hold on
plot(Btime*1000, MmagHF, 'r');
```
During the fit, the minimum and maximum allowed values for "initState", which determines the triplet sublevel populations, were set to 0 and 1, respectively. The final simulated values for then normalised to a total of 1 to obtain the reported triplet populations. Similarly, the minimum value for "lw" was set to zero to prevent non-physical negative values from arising.

Pulsed EPR Data and Fitting

Pulsed EPR data was collected by measuring echoes with and without laser flashes (500 nm light, 3.5 – 4.5 mJ/pulse, 5-7 ns pulses). Echoes originating from the cavity could then be subtracted from the sample data following a laser pulse. We initiated our measurements with **Anthracene:TCNB** at 10 K, wherein fieldswept echoes were used to find the field position with the most intense signal at 3000/3900 G (**Fig. S7**). Due to the nature of sub-level specific spin-lattice relaxation, ⁹ we opted to target the same triplet sub-level transition at these canonical Y-/+ field positions for all of our materials. The low signal-to-noise ratio of these powder measurements prevented an extensive temperature-dependent exploration of their spin dynamics.

Transient echo traces were fitted with single exponential functions, and temperature-dependent trends in *T¹* and *T2*, were fitted to the appropriate Direct, Raman, or Orbach processes according to the following relationships:10–¹²

Direct Process, ¹

 $\frac{1}{T_1} = A_{dir} B^4 T$ Where T_1 is the spin-lattice relaxation, A_{dir} is an experimentally determined adjustable parameter, B is the magnetic field, and T is temperature.

Raman Process, ¹

$$
\frac{1}{T_1} = b_o T^n
$$

Where b_o is an experimentally determined adjustable parameter, $Tⁿ$ is the temperature with a power dependence, n.

Orbach Process, ¹ $\frac{1}{T_1} = b_o \Delta_{orb}^3 e^{-\Delta_{orb}/k_B T}$

9-AAN-TCNB

Where Δ_{orb} is the energy of the excited state in question, k_B is the Boltzmann constant.

Anthracene:TCNB was fitted with a modified relationship to describe clearly diverging behavior:

$$
T_{1\,total}^{-1} = T_{1\,direct}^{-1} + T_{1\,raman/orbach}^{-1}
$$

Figure S7. (left) Field swept echoes for each CT material measured at 10 K; (right) Field swept echoes of **9-AAN:TCNB** collected at different temperatures.

Single Crystal X-ray Diffraction

Figure S8: (**A**) Unit cell of **1-AAN** viewed along the b-axis. **1-AAN** crystallized in the *P21/c* space group.

Additional DFT Calculations

Computational electronic calculations were performed on acetylanthracenes and their co-crystal dimers at the CAM-B3LYP/6-311G+d level¹³ in Gaussian09.^{14,15} The molecules were initially optimised for the single ground state. The ground state geometries of co-crystal dimer structures were taken from their respective crystal structures. **9-AAN:TCNB** was taken from the structure reported by Li *et al.* ¹⁶ To determine the singlet and triplet state energies of the dimers, time-dependent-density functional theory (TD-DFT) calculations were performed on the singlet state geometry. All excitation energies were normalized to the singlet ground state following Bogatko *et al.*¹⁷

Figure S9: (a) Singlet and triplet state energies of optimized acetylanthracenes; (b) their HOMO (S₀) and LUMO (S_1) orbitals and ground state total electron density distributions.

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Compound	Exp. $S_0 - S_1$	S ₁	T_{n}	T ₁	ΔE _{S1-Tn}	ΔE _{S1-T1}
1-AAN	2.86	3.21	3.47	2.08	0.25	1.21
$1,5-DAAN$	2.83	3.14	3.28	2.09	0.14	1.05
$9 - AAN$	3.16	3.39	3.75	2.11	0.36	1.28
9,10-DAAN	3.15	3.37	3.77	2.24	0.40	1.13
Anthracene:TCNB	2.42	2.64	2.51	2.33	0.13	0.31
1-AAN:TCNB	2.48	2.57	2.7	2.18	0.13	0.39
1,5-DAAN:TCNB	2.61	2.78	2.77	2.27	0.01	0.51
9-AAN:TCNB	2.48	2.78	2.81	2.28	-0.03	0.50

Table S3: Summary of DFT-derived molecular state energies. Energies are normalized against the energy of S_0 . Units in eV.

Figure S10: Molecular orbitals for low-lying triplet states for (**a**) **Anthracene:TCNB**, (**b**) **1-AAN:TCNB**, (**c**) **1,5- DAAN:TCNB**, (**d**) **9-AAN:TCNB**

Spin-orbit Coupling Calculations

The spin-orbit coupling matrix elements were determined at the B3LYP def2-SVP level using the Orca 5.0.1 package.18,19

			1-AAN		1-AAN:TCNB			
Triplet	Singlet	$$ $\rm cm^{\text{-}1}$			$$			
State, n	State, n				$cm-1$			
		$\boldsymbol{\mathrm{X}}$	X	Z	$\mathbf X$	$\boldsymbol{\mathrm{X}}$	Z	
$\mathbf{1}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\mathbf{0}$	0.01	-0.01	-0.18	-0.01	
$\mathbf{1}$	$\mathbf{1}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.01	0.19	-0.11	
$\mathbf{1}$	\overline{c}	10.11	1.17	$\mathbf{0}$	-0.01	$0.01\,$	0.14	
$\mathbf{1}$	3	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.03	0.18	-0.26	-0.41	
$\mathbf{1}$	$\overline{\mathbf{4}}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\mathbf{0}$	0.01	0.67	-0.98	-1.6	
$\mathbf{1}$	5	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.02	0.58	-0.83	-1.46	
$\overline{2}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	45.74	5.92	0.01	0.01	-0.22	-0.26	
\overline{c}	$\mathbf{1}$	4.99	0.51	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.01	0.02	-0.02	
$\overline{\mathbf{c}}$	\overline{c}	$\mathbf{0}$	$\mathbf{0}$	0.37	0.03	-0.16	-0.23	
$\overline{\mathbf{c}}$	3	-2.05	-0.45	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-2.56	3.93	6.08	
$\frac{2}{2}$	$\overline{4}$	-0.09	0.03	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.16	-0.43	-0.23	
	5	-10.6	-1.68	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.01	0.09	0.15	
$\overline{3}$	$\mathbf{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.01	0.09	0.15	
3	$\mathbf{1}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.01	-0.03	-0.1	-0.08	
$\frac{3}{3}$	\overline{c}	-13.97	-1.74	-0.01	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.01	-0.03	
	3	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.01	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.02	0.01	
$\overline{3}$	$\overline{\mathbf{4}}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.04	-0.12	-0.03	
$\overline{3}$	5	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.02	0.01	
$\overline{4}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\mathbf{0}$	-0.91	1.8	2.9	
$\overline{4}$	$\mathbf{1}$	$\mathbf{0}$	$\overline{0}$	0.02	2.66	-4.08	-6.29	
$\overline{4}$	\overline{c}	1.38	0.28	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.32	-0.48	-0.75	
$\overline{4}$	3	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$0.01\,$	-0.02	
$\overline{4}$	$\overline{\mathbf{4}}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.5	-0.95	-1.35	
$\overline{4}$	5	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.49	1.18	1.47	
$\overline{5}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.04	-10.18	20.38	33	
5	$\mathbf{1}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.04	-0.14	0.19	0.38	
5	\overline{c}	8.36	1.16	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.27	0.39	0.63	
5	3	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.01	-0.08	0.21	-0.04	
5	$\overline{\mathbf{4}}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	-0.03	1.81	-2.54	-3.87	
5	5	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\mathbf{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	1.33	-1.87	-2.86	

Table S5: Spin-orbit coupling matrix elements for 1-acetylanthracene (**1-AAN**) and its **TCNB** co-crystal determined by TD-DFT at the B3LYP/def2-ZVP level.

Table S8: Spin-orbit coupling matrix elements for 9,10 diacetylanthracene (**9,10-DAAN**) determined by TD-DFT at the B3LYP/def2-ZVP level.

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