

Disparaging; possibly a variant of **OLD BAT**, cognisant of **OLD BAG** (elderly prostitute) which itself may derive from **OLD BAT**. Ray Puxley, writing in 1992, suggests this may be rhyming slang, formed on 'hag'.

- I had to get the old bag on the end of a string, which I found was only too easy in fact it was a doddle. — Frank Norman, *Bang To Rights*, p. 111, 1958
- An old bag, minus a nose, was drinking quietly in a dirty little entry off Hanbury Street. — Geoffrey Fletcher, *Down Among the Meths Men*, p. 54, 1966
- [of Margaret Thatcher] That's really bad luck isn't it? To have two personalities and for both of them to be rancid old bags. — Mark Steel, *Reasons to be Cheerful*, p. 206, 2001

2 an elderly, statterly prostitute; hence pejorative for a younger prostitute *UK*

- — Julian Franklyn, *A Dictionary of Rhyming Slang*, 1961

old bastard *noun*

a man; fellow *AUSTRALIA*, 1944

Used as an ironic form of friendly personal address, generally amongst males. Such is the love for this expression amongst working-class Australians, a charity organisation was formed in the 1970s under the name the *Australasian Order of Old Bastards*. Part of the rules of the order is that 'On encountering other O.B.'s in a bar one must administer a hearty slap on the back, accompanied with the cheerful salutation, "Hello you Old Bastard!" Membership card must be carried at all times. Failure to produce same when challenged by fellow O.B. incurs a penalty of one round of drinks'.

- No doubt about the old bastard – the day you put anything over him will be the day! — J.E. MacDonnell, *Don't Gimme the Ships*, p. 19, 1960
- It's good to see you, you old bastard. — Jean Brooks, *The Opal Witch*, p. 175, 1967
- Line us up a row of nice frosty stubbies will you – you miserable old bastard! — Barry Humphries, *The Wonderful World of Barry McKenzie*, p. 42, 1968
- Harry Rowley, a mate o' mine. Auctioneer. Tell him old Rosella frigger sent yer and ter give yer a job or I'll cut his water off, the old bastard. — D'Arcy Niland, *Dead Men Running*, p. 57, 1969
- He used to win and lose twenty grand in a night and he always had a hundred for me at the door. Didn't you, you old bastard. — Robert English, *Toxic Kisses*, p. 40, 1979
- They slap one another on the back saying things like silly old bastard. — Sandra Jobson, *Blokes*, p. 78, 1984
- But Peter and Jerry were likeable and persistent old bastards and for two years I conspired with them to get their monument afloat. — Shane Maloney, *Nice Try*, p. 253, 1998

old bill *noun*

1 the penis *UK*

- The horse had an old bill about five foot long and it was practically touching the floor. — Lenny McLean, *The Guv'nor*, p. 44, 1998
- My old bill's up and pointing at me again now. — J.J. Connolly, *Layer Cake*, p. 214, 2000

Old Bill *noun*

2 a signal, by hand or word, asking 'Are there any other cheaters in this game?' *US*

- — John Scarne, *Scarne's Guide to Modern Poker*, p. 285, 1979

3 a police officer; the police *UK*, 1958

Original usage was singular, now mainly collective. Feasible etymologies, in no particular order of likelihood: i) 'Old Bill', a strip-cartoon character created by Bruce Bairnsfeather (1888–1959), was a veteran of World War 1 with a distinctive 'authoritarian-looking' moustache – a status and description shared by many pre-World War 2 policemen. This derivation may be reinforced by the 1917 UK government's advertising campaign, featuring Old Bill dressed as a special constable, using the heading 'Old Bill says...' to disseminate important wartime information. ii) Derived from a blend of popular song 'Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey' punning with 'The Old Bailey' (London's Central Criminal Court). iii) 'Old Bill' was King William IV (1765–1837), during whose reign (1830–37) the police force is wrongly thought to have been established. iv) 'Kaiser Bill', Kaiser Wilhelm I of Prussia (1797–1888), visited England in 1864 when the police uniform changed to helmet and tunic. v) Constables of the watch were nicknamed for the bills or billhooks that they carried as weapons. vi) In Victorian times the 'old bill' was the bill, or account, presented by police accepting bribes, or for services rendered. vii) New laws are introduced as parliamentary *bills*. viii) The London County Council registered all public service vehicles (police, fire and ambulance) with number plates **BYL**, leading villains to spot unmarked police cars as 'old Bill'. ix)

Similarly, Scotland Yard's 'Flying Squad' (established 1921) was reportedly issued with **BYL** registrations so that the Squad became known as 'old Bill', and hence the police in general. x) In the 1860s Sergeant Bill Smith of Limehouse was nicknamed 'Old Bill', apocryphally enlarged as 'If Old Bill hadn't turned up we'd have murdered them': Martin King & Martin Knight, *The Naughty Nineties*, 1999. Recorded, in a brief glossary of travellers' terms, by Martin Roach, *Dr. Marten's Air Wair*, 1999.

- "No, I won't," says Bri, with a bit of this spirit Old Bill's been on about, "because I haven't done nothink so get well you know what" — Derek Raymond (Robin Cook), *The Crust On Its Uppers*, p. 48, 1962
- It was wall-to-wall Old Bill that night[.] — Val McDermid, *Keeping on the Right Side of the Law*, p. 178, 1999
- The Old Bill there were as thick as pig shit[.] — Dave Courtney, *Raving Lunacy*, p. 12, 2000
- A certain East End copper who liked his beer. His daughter would be sent to fetch him home from one of a number of local pubs, pushing open the door she would cry: "Anyone seen old Bill?" — *The Bill: Official Website for TV Police Drama*, 2001

▷ **SEE: THE BILL**

old bird *noun*

a mature, older or old woman *UK*

- I've never seen an old bird scoff so much, yet she stayed miniature. — Jonathan Gash, *The Ten Word Game*, p. 131, 2003

old bird *adjective*

of a prisoner, having traditional values *UK*

- Cody, for all his protestations of having been wrongfully convicted, is classic "old bird". No snitching. No siding with the authorities. — *The Guardian*, 26th July 2001

old blind Bob *noun*

the penis *UK*, 1974

old bloke *noun*

the penis *AUSTRALIA*

- [N]ext thing you know, some bloke's straddling the hatch on the squat with a rope around his old bloke. — Roy Slaven (John Doyle), *Five South Coast Seasons*, p. 9, 1992

Old Blue Eyes *nickname*

Frank Sinatra, American singer (1915–1998) *US*

- [T]wo together for old blue eyes' umpteenth farewell concert[.] — Anthony Masters, *Minder*, p. 49, 1984
- Has Ol' Blue Eyes ever been up? — Josh Alan Friedman, *Tales of Times Square*, p. 42, 1986
- The guards grinned and waved, and with her earth-brown hair streaming from under the helmet, Breda sprinted past Tamarisk Country Club, the home of Old Blue Eyes himself. — Joseph Wambaugh, *Fugitive Nights*, p. 55, 1992
- Ol' Blue Eyes did it His Way even after the final curtain fell, leaving a fortune to charities supporting abused children. — Aubrey Dillon-Malone, *I Was A Fugitive From A Hollywood Trivia Factory*, p. 135, 1999

old bollocks *noun*

an older man *UK*

- I really do like the old bollocks for all his faults[.] — J.J. Connolly, *Layer Cake*, p. 88, 2000

old boot; boot *noun*

an unattractive woman, a woman with qualities that are considered unattractive *UK*, 1958

- Ere, you dirty old boot, we know who you are and what you're doing. — Joe Morgan, *Eastenders Don't Cry*, p. 31, 1994

old boy *noun*

1 the penis *US*, 1943

- — Jim Ramsay, *Cop It Sweet!*, p. 65, 1977
- Up until I bolted to be with you, the only stimulation the old boy got was the odd dip in crab emulsion. — Kathy Lette, *Girls' Night Out*, p. 181, 1987

2 used as a friendly form of address to another man *UK*

A colloquial vocative since C17.

- A job, old boy? — *The Observer*, 11th June 2000

3 an old man *UK*, 1500

- There were only two punters, old boys playing crib. — Garry Bushell, *The Face*, p. 6, 2001

4 a father *UK*, 1892

old boy network; Old Boy network *noun*

a social and, especially, business connection between former Public School pupils which is presumed, by those without such a connection, to give unfair advantages in matters of employment and social advancement; also applied to