CAMRA condemns flogging off of UK’s cask brewing assets

12/07/2024 by Timothy Hampson

Campaign

The Campaign has attacked the UK’s largest cask beer producer’s decision to sell its brewing operations to a global brewer. CAMRA said it is fearful about the future of UK beers, brands and breweries following the announcement that Marston’s is selling all its remaining ‘non-core’ brewing assets to a subsidiary of Carlsberg, to focus on running pubs. Marston’s is selling its 40 per cent stake in the Carlsberg Marston’s Brewing Company (CMBC) joint venture, ending almost 150 years of brewing heritage which began with Banks and Company at the Park brewery, Wolverhampton in 1875.  The sale comes after Carlsberg Marston’s Brewing Company introduced its 'Fresh Ale’ concept earlier this year. Fresh Ales are keg versions of cask beers, served through traditional handpumps. CAMRA slammed the move as misleading to consumers and damaging to traditional cask ale, while also reporting the brewing giant to Trading Standards. CAMRA national chairman Nik Antona said: “This is a worrying development for Britain’s brewing heritage with Marston’s remaining brewing assets being transferred to a global brewing business which has already presided over the closure of historic breweries like Jennings in Cumbria and Charles Wells Eagle in Bedford, stopped selling cask ale in Scotland and has introduced an extremely damaging ale concept which is misleading to pub-goers and threatens the future of British cask conditioned ale. “CAMRA fears this announcement could lead to a further erosion of the UK’s rich brewing history for the benefit of conglomerate global brewers – and particularly the commitment to brewing cask. “The consolidation of the brewing industry into just a few large, international players erodes our brewing heritage, consumer choice, the diversity of beer in pubs across the country and the access to market for small, independent producers. “Having Marston’s pubs continuing to be subject to an anti-competitive supply tie by Carlsberg Marston’s Brewing Company is also a cause for concern, limiting choice for customers of great locally produced beer and cider from independent producers nationwide.  “Marston’s and CMBC bosses must commit to the future of brewing cask, improving consumer choice at the bar, protecting Britain’s brewing heritage and scrapping their damaging fresh ale concept once and for all.”