Renewed attack on Carlsberg’s hijack handpulls

25/04/2025 by Timothy Hampson

Campaign



CAMRA has renewed calls for the brewing giant to stop selling imitation cask beer, one year on from the Fresh Ale launch. The Campaign has accused global drinks producer Carlsberg of damaging the reputation of cask beer by hijacking traditional handpulls to sell its imitation Fresh Ale. The Fresh Ale concept sees kegged beer served through handpulls masquerading as cask beer. Recent reports claim Fresh Ale sales have been growing steadily. CAMRA does not see this will “reinvigorate the popularity of cask” but will instead mislead consumers and remove cask beer from bars.  CAMRA has complained to Trading Standards about the range, maintaining it qualifies as misleading dispense, and says the reputation of cask beer is being damaged by Carlsberg’s attempts to hijack handpulls. CAMRA is calling on the government to step in and is urging Trading Standards departments across the country to prevent pubgoers from being duped into buying Fresh Ale. CAMRA national chairman Ash Corbett-Collins (pictured) said: “Enjoying a pint of cracking cask beer from your local pub is one of life’s great pleasures. Cask beer is the real deal – a fresh, live product crafted with great care by the UK’s best brewers. “Our tradition of enjoying great cask beer is under threat from Carlsberg’s plan to keep rolling out its Fresh Ale, which we believe is an inferior substitute for proper cask beer.  “Instead of being open and honest about the new kegged beers it is selling, Carlsberg is undermining centuries of British tradition and misleading punters into thinking they are ordering cask beer from a traditional handpull at the bar. It also elbows out opportunities for independent breweries to serve their cask beer at the bar if pumps are taken up with this Fresh Ale instead.”