CLAIMS

1 A die former (200) comprising a lower die (201) and an upper die (202, 203) relatively displaceable towards each other to define a former mould therebetween from opposed mould portions, each mould portion having a periphery for the former mould and the periphery having peg elements (211) spaced along the periphery with gaps between them to receive peg elements (212) from the opposed mould portion, the interlocking peg elements defining at least part of the periphery in use.

2 A former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the peg elements are about opposed parts of the periphery.

3 A former as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the peg elements extend about an end of the former mould.

4 A former as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the gaps are substantially closed by received peg elements from the opposed mould portion.

5 A former as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the pegs are shaped and configured to inhibit lateral relative displacement and/or rotational movement between the mould portions.

6 A former as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the pegs have an angled surface to urge alignment therebetween and so between the opposed mould portions.

7 A former as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the upper die comprises more than one die part.

8 A former as claimed in claim 7 wherein the pegs are provided in only one die part of the upper die.

9 A former as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the former mould is for a gas turbine blade (204) with a leading edge (206) and a trailing edge (207).

10 A former as claimed in claim 9 wherein the pegs are only about the periphery of the former mould associated with the leading edge and/or the trailing edge.

11 A former as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the former die is configured for hot creep forming or superplastic forming.

12 A former as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the mould portions are arranged to define a twist along an axis of the component.

13 A method of forming a component comprising utilising a die former as claimed in any of claims 1 to 12 and forcefully bringing together the lower die and the upper die to form a component within the die former.

14 A method as claimed in claim 13 wherein the pegs are provided to progressively contain a component within the former mould during the method.

15 A method as claimed in claim 13 or claim 14 wherein the forming process is hot creep forming or superplastic deformation.

The invention claimed is:

1. A die former comprising a lower die and an upper die relatively displaceable towards each other to define a former mould therebetween from opposed mould portions, each mould portion having a periphery for the former mould and the periphery having peg elements spaced along the periphery with gaps between them, the gaps being arranged to receive peg elements from the opposed mould portion such that the peg elements of each mould portion fit into the gaps of the opposed mould portion so as to be interlocking, the interlocking peg elements defining at least part of the periphery in use.

2. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the peg elements are about opposed parts of the periphery.

3. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the peg elements extend about an end of the former mould.

4. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the gaps are substantially closed by received peg elements from the opposed mould portion.

5. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pegs are shaped and configured to inhibit lateral relative displacement and/or rotational movement between the mould portions.

6. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pegs have an angled surface to urge alignment therebetween and so between the opposed mould portions.

7. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the upper die comprises more than one die part.

8. The die former as claimed in claim 7 wherein the pegs are provided in only one die part of the upper die.

9. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the former mould is for a gas turbine blade with a leading edge and a trailing edge.

10. The die former as claimed in claim 9 wherein the pegs are only about the periphery of the former mould associated with the leading edge and/or the trailing edge.

11. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the former die is configured for hot creep forming or superplastic forming.

12. The die former as claimed in claim 1 wherein the mould portions are arranged to define a twist along an axis of the component.

13. A method of forming a component comprising utilising a die former as claimed in claim 1 and forcefully bringing together the lower die and the upper die to form a component within the die former.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13 wherein the pegs are provided to progressively contain a component within the former mould during the method.

15. A method as claimed in claim 13 wherein the forming process is hot creep forming or superplastic deformation.