



# Kimberley Society

## Book Note

***The garden of myth : life at the AIM Hospital, Halls Creek, Western Australia, 1918–21 and 1946–48* by Joan Rogasch & Dulcie Andrew. Privately published, printed by Peacock Publications, Norwood (SA), 2012. Soft cover, 107 pages, illustrated, portraits, maps, ISBN 9780980785524, RRP \$35.**

In preparing this note, I need to say that I had some involvement in the production of the book. My role was not extensive but, after getting to know the lead author through her earlier works, I looked into some historical anomalies that arose in this one. Before taking that on, I had been invited to write a foreword. So, rather than write a book note, I will let the foreword speak for it.

The book can be purchased from [Halls Creek Visitor Centre](#).

### **Foreword to *The garden of myth***

Numerous books and articles have documented the work of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM). Some focus on the work of its founder, Reverend John Flynn, while others tell of the nurses, padres and others who helped to deliver a 'mantle of safety' to the inland.

The best known books of the past twelve years have come from Max Griffiths and Ivan Rudolph. Both writers were motivated by a desire to see the AIM nurses receive greater acknowledgement. Their books embrace all of inland Australia in the twentieth century.

Joan Rogasch has also been productive. Her previous book, *Lil's story*, is about Sister Mary Elizabeth (Lil) Rogasch, the first AIM nurse in the far north of Western Australia. Sent there to run the tiny Halls Creek hospital in 1918, she was joined by her sister Beatrice (Dot), who was also a nurse, towards the end her posting. That period was covered by *Memoirs of a nurse*, written by Lil in the 1920s or '30s, edited by Joan decades later, and, like *Lil's story*, published in 2010.

Lil and Dot Rogasch also feature in *The garden of myth* where their time in Halls Creek is compared with that of Sisters Dulcie Peel (now Andrew) and Marjorie McKean who arrived in 1946 and stayed until 1948. Services and infrastructure had improved greatly in the intervening twenty-five years but, in living and working in an isolated settlement that had no resident doctor, the nurses of the 1940s had to be almost as self-sufficient as their predecessors.

In joining Joan in the production of this compact book, Dulcie provided not only another firsthand account of life in Halls Creek but also another set of photographs to draw on. The result is an appealing, well-illustrated account of two periods of nursing in one small part of the inland. Read alone or in conjunction with other books, *The garden of myth* provides insight into the outlook, resourcefulness and stamina of people who enjoyed few of the conveniences that we now take for granted. It adds to our knowledge of both Halls Creek and the AIM, making it a welcome addition to the range of publications that are marking the AIM's centenary year.

*Cathie Clement*