Cataloguing - three different approaches to cataloging your collection.

Linda Burridge from Berwick Mechanics Institute (BMI)
http://www.berwickmilibrary.org.au/

The BMI has a collection of 21,000 items. It has operated as a lending library since 1864. They had a manual circulation system and a card catalogue, but decided that they needed to computerise those functions, looked at various systems and, in the end, went with Bookmark as their Library Management system. This was a product developed by the Department of Education in South Australia. The initial cost was $2,000 in 2013 which included supply, installation and barcodes. Support is $250.00 per annum. They catalogued their collection by either downloading records from the National Library of Australia or creating an original catalogue record. Bookmark is also used for circulation - borrowing and returning items.

The BMI collection is mainly books and magazines and thus they do differ from many Historical Societies who have more documents, photos and objects. However, what they have in common with Historical Societies is that they are entirely run by volunteers who have various levels of computer skills and they have a limited budget and thus they required a Library Management system that was inexpensive, easy to use and didn't have high on-going support costs.

You can see their catalogue here http://bookmark.central.sa.edu.au/bmi.htm

Lynne Bradley from Narre Warren & District Family History Group
http://nwfhg.org.au/

The Family History Group has a collection of 6,000 resources including books, magazines, micro fiche and files of information. They had a very old version of DB Textworks Inmagic and wanted to find a system to replace that as a catalogue and that would also have circulation functions. They selected Library Thing https://www.librarything.com/ and Small Library Organiser Pro. http://www.primasoft.com/pro_software/library_software_pro.htm

The Group joined Library Thing and added their collection to it by exporting matching records from the National Library of Australia, the British National Library, the State Library of Victoria and other libraries. Any items not contained within those institutions they had to manually catalogue. More than one person can catalogue at the same time.

You can use Library Thing as a catalogue - you can see their collection here https://www.librarything.com/profile/NarreWarrenFHG but as the Group are not on-line all the time they also purchased Small Library Organiser PRO. They then needed to export the records from Library Thing to Microsoft Excel and then load up to Small Library Organiser PRO which importantly also has a circulation function. They use this to allow members to borrow from their collection, previous to this it was a manual system. As Lynne says, 'while it might seem like double handling to some - it seems to be working for us' and that's all that matters.

Belinda Ensor from Victoria Collections

https://victoriancollections.net.au/

What is Victorian Collections? This is from their website: *Victorian Collections is a free, web-based collections management system that allows you to publish your records online. The project - which is backed by ongoing support, site visits and training programs throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria - helps organisations to unlock the potential of digital collection access without the cost. Hundreds of groups have contributed to the growing database of objects, creating a central portal to Victoria's rich cultural heritage and diverse histories.*

- Victorian Collections is part of Museums Victoria but now has its own on-going funding. It is free to join and use.
- Each organisation has a log-on and password and there are also different permission levels, so your organisation can decide what level of access there is within your group. It allows multiple users to work on it at one time. You need the Internet but can work from anywhere. They are also developing an off-line module.
- 420 organisations currently use it from rowing clubs, museums, archives, galleries to schools and Progress Associations.
- You can use Victorian Collections but keep your collection private so no-one can see it or you can share all your records with the general public.
- The cataloguing record contains some information that is hidden such as donor details and value. You can see these details when you log on, but the public don't see them.
- Victorian Collections can now provide assistance to help you bulk upload your records from other programs.
- However, they understand that many people are happy with their existing cataloguing programs such as DB Textworks Inmagic so Belinda suggested that you could add a small number of items onto Victorian Collections. The advantages of this are -
  - you can highlight and publicise your most significant items
  - it gives you an Internet presence
  - it helps promote your organisation
- Trove http://trove.nla.gov.au and Victorian Collections have an on-going partnership and items can be shared by Trove, which could give your organisation even more exposure.