

The picture that means SO MUCH

When Sandie Christie lost her twins, she made sure they'd never be forgotten...

When you look at this picture, at first glance you probably see a happy couple enjoying some spring sunshine in the park. But if you look closely you'll see the tears filling my husband Grant's eyes. Even now, I can still feel the bittersweet pangs of pride and grief.

We found out we were expecting twins in November 2012. Grant and I already had a son called Bobby, then 18 months, and our jobs – Grant was an accountant, I was a physiotherapist – were demanding. Still, despite how hectic life already was, we couldn't wait to become a family of five.

Of course, that meant we had to make some practical plans too – start saving and move back to West Lothian from Essex to be near our families. After all, we'd need all the help we could get!

But it was just before we moved into a new house when, at a check-up in December, the doctor found that the twins were sharing a placenta, making it a riskier pregnancy. We were monitored closely and I took comfort in the fact that every morning at 3am they'd kick



A bittersweet moment for Sandie and husband Grant on their girls' memorial bench

me awake like clockwork.

Only, one morning at 23 weeks, they didn't.

I remember looking at the clock on my bedside table and feeling a jolt of panic. It was 7.30am. The babies hadn't kicked all night.

'Wake up, little puddings!' I said, rubbing my bump. But there was nothing. 'I probably

just slept through the kicks,' I told myself, getting ready for work.

Over the next few hours, I drank fizzy

drinks and snacked on sweets, hoping the sugar would stir the babies. But although there was some slight twitching, I knew something wasn't right.

Growing more and more worried, Grant raced me to St

John's Hospital in Livingston and, while he sat with Bobby in the waiting room, I was taken in for a scan.

As the doppler was moved around my stomach I kept waiting, kept hoping for a sound to fill the room – but there was only silence.

'I'm so sorry,' the midwife said softly, looking down. 'There are no heartbeats.'

Finding strength

I could have fallen apart, I wanted to. But Bobby was just outside, so I knew I had to be strong for him.

The midwife explained I'd have to come back the next day to speak to a doctor. And that night, when we got home and put Bobby to bed, Grant and I finally allowed ourselves to cry. As he held me in his arms I clutched my stomach.

'How can this be happening?' I sobbed.

The next day, tests confirmed our babies had died at 23 weeks. But we'd have to wait for a post-mortem to find out why. Then the doctor dropped another bombshell. 'You'll have to give birth to the twins, Sandie,' he said. I felt physically sick. After everything that had happened, I couldn't believe I still had to go through the pain of labour.

Bobby stayed with Grant's parents while I was admitted to the ward. I was induced that evening and, with Grant by my side, on 9 March 2013 our little girls were born.

They were tiny, but they were perfect. 'They look like Bobby,' I wept, as they were wrapped in a blanket and placed in my arms. →

'THE BABIES HADN'T KICKED'