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Gary Wigglesworth drives the newly-restored, class-winning 914/6 GT from the 1971 24-hour enduro at this year's "24 Minutes of Daytona" vintage exhibition.



THE RACE TO THE RACE

By Debbie Ream
Central Pennsylvania Region

The 914 had to be perfectly imperfect — just like it was when it won at Daytona!



LEONARD TURNER

Gary Wigglesworth took off his glasses and wiped the sweat from his face with a handkerchief. He was still wearing the Levis and Penn State sweatshirt from the night before when he and his family left Pennsylvania in below-freezing weather. Now, despite the awning, the Daytona sun and humidity were taking their toll.

Wigglesworth, his two sons, Craig and Gary, Jr., and his daughter Dawn worked frantically, as they had been for the past week, to prepare his 914/6 GT for the vintage demonstration at this year's 24 Hours of Daytona. The smell of oil and exhaust hung in the thick air and engines roared like thunder from every direction.

"Double check that photo, Craig," Wigglesworth said in a stressed-but-trying-to-stay-calm voice. The

yellow and orange ugly duckling sat like a trophy in the Manufacturer's Midway, while hands furiously wiped, screwed, adjusted . . . "If the picture shows the Goodyear sticker as crooked, put it on crooked," Wigglesworth said, his jaw clenched. "And measure how far forward it goes from the door."

Jim Bailey from Brumos' operation got caught up in the fury and offered a hand. Hunched alongside the patient, cigarette dangling from his lips, he put years of last-minute-race-details experience to work as he gently smoothed a big circular decal over the rear wheel flare for the number "five" to be placed on at an angle, as the photos showed.

Wigglesworth's car had to be perfectly imperfect, by his own standards. Having placed first in its division and seventh overall at the 1971 Daytona, this car

and, consequently, Wigglesworth were invited to attend this year's race as a vintage representative. And Wigglesworth had his mind set on recreating the past. Unable to get a hold of Jacques Duval, the Canadian PCAer who raced the car into the history books, Wigglesworth relied on photos and oldtimers to make the car look just like it had 20 years ago.

I met Wigglesworth at his business in York, Pennsylvania, a few weeks after the event. "I was actually at Daytona when this car won," he says. His silver, bespectacled head is framed by rows and rows of maroon Porsche workshop manuals on the shelves behind him. Porsche calendars, photos, awards, posters and a stained glass 356 Speedster adorn the walls everywhere you look. From the outside his office looks like an old warehouse that would rather not be vertical, but inside is a catacomb of hallways and garages, lofts and stairways, with Porsches, whole or in pieces, stuffed into every nook and cranny, waiting for restoration or repair.

"Most people looked down their noses at 914s," he continues. "They called them Volkswagens. But I had one even then and was ecstatic that the 911 guys had to live with its success. I can actually remember saying to my wife, 'God, I'd love to own that car.'" Quite

a few onlookers probably made a similar wish that day.

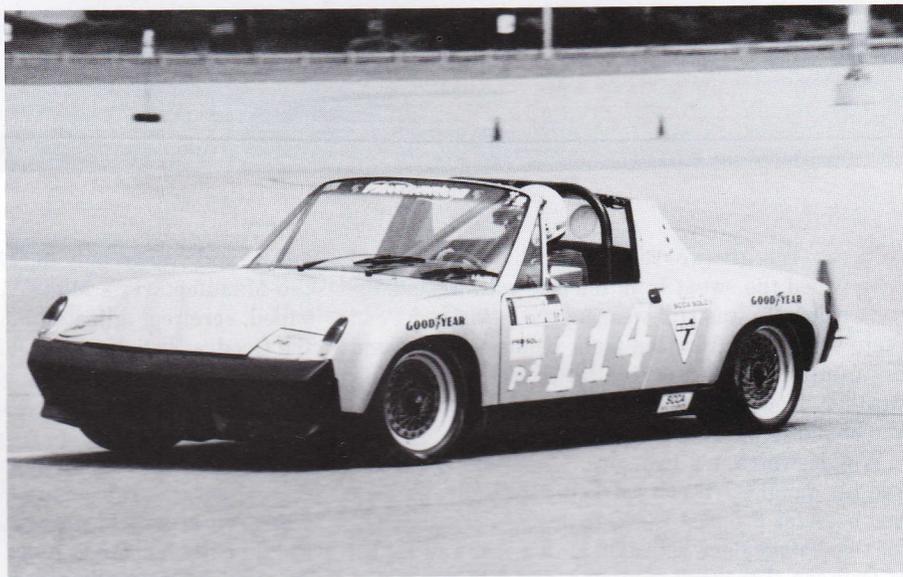
It was January 30, 1971, the tenth anniversary of the race, when the flag released the hot shoes on the 3.81-mile track. Twenty-four hours later, four Porsches held the top nine positions. Pedro Rodriguez and Jackie Oliver took the race in one of the Gulf-Wyer 917s to collect Porsche's 18th point toward the 1971 Manufacturers' championship. But down the list a ways, past only a few of the big boys, a couple of little 914s raised some eyebrows.

One of the first GTs in America

Wigglesworth's car was one of the first GTs imported into North America. Duval had the car flown in and received it in its original light ivory on January 6, 1971; he also had to hustle to get it ready for Daytona. He and his teammates, George Nicholas and Bob Bailey, were sponsored by Sunoco of Canada. Bailey had never even driven a 914 before the race, but reported it less fatiguing to handle than the 911s which had left the team frustrated with four non-finishes at Daytona.

The Canadian privateers hauled their lemon-orange champ on a single-axle trailer behind an Avis

An active autocrosser competing nationally in PCA and Solo II, Wigglesworth has used the 914/6 GT often. Here is how it looked ten days before the trip to Daytona.





BILL WARNER

Driven in 1971 by Canadian Jacques Duval with George Nicholas and Bob Bailey, the 914/6 GT finished seventh overall in the race won by Pedro Rodriguez and Jackie Oliver in a Gulf-Wyer 917.

rental van to three more races. They finished fifth in class and 17th overall at Sebring, after throttle cable problems. But after a complete rebuild the car placed first overall at a wet Six Hours of St. Croix, an annual event along the St. Lawrence Seaway near Quebec City, Canada. Its last race was the annual Carnival at Three Rivers, Canada, which features a 15-lap sprint race as part of the festivities. Here, the car placed first in class and third overall.

Wigglesworth never really thought about the car after the Daytona race until 1980 when, as fate would have it, he received a call from the car's second owner, Jerry Huffman. "Around then I was thinking of making my red 914/6, which had about 170,000 miles on it, into a GT factory look-alike," Wigglesworth says. "Out of the blue a guy called me from Potomac Region about a car in Harrisburg that a friend of his was interested in." Wigglesworth was familiar with the car, and as one PCAer to another, did what he could to help the caller, who turned out to be Huffman. Eventually, the conversation turned to their personal cars.

"I have a 914," Huffman offered.

"Me, too," Wigglesworth replied.

"Mine's a six."

"Mine, too."

"Mine's a GT."

Ding, ding, ding. Wigglesworth loaded up his two boys and headed down to Alexandria, Virginia, to photograph the car for his restoration project. He found the GT untouched since a fire gutted it at a Summit Point track event a year and a half before.

"It still had fire extinguisher fluid on it," Wigglesworth recalls. "On the way home it occurred to me that maybe I should just try to buy this car."

The two haggled over the phone for several weeks. "He just wasn't interested in selling, so he could set his own price. Finally I talked it over with my wife. I really wanted that car by then. I took out a mortgage and bought the damn thing."

The car was autocrossed for a while and then put into mothballs until about three or four years ago when Wigglesworth started autocrossing on the national Pro Solo circuit. He placed third in the nation



The speedy restoration: Sunoco orange paint chips were plentiful for matching, but only one original yellow chip was found beneath the windshield wiper mechanism.

in 1988 and second in 1989, and won the SCCA Division championships both years. He also took the CMC Solo II national title in 1989, and turned in the FTD at the Great Lakes Parade in Traverse City.

Invitation to a race

Four weeks before this year's 30th 24 Hours of Daytona, Mike Rand from the SportsCar Vintage Racing Association called Wigglesworth to verify that he'd be participating in the vintage tribute. Thirty past-participants would represent race history as well as a mix of technology that had what it took to finish the enduro. The "24 Minutes of Daytona" parade laps would be held during the gridding of the cars for the SunBank 24.

Wigglesworth was tempted. He'd always wanted to drive Daytona, even if it was just for show. But he knew time wasn't on his side. "Original esthetic condition, I suppose?" Wigglesworth questioned Rand. He thought of his silver autocrossing machine, then glanced at the 20-year-old photo from Daytona when the car blazed the track in its Sunoco yellow and orange. Sometimes it took Wigglesworth a year or more to restore a car.

"Just so it looks like it did the day it raced," Rand replied optimistically. There was a long pause.

"Well," Wigglesworth said slowly, "we'll give it a try."

Wigglesworth got off the phone and considered his options. He'd been planning to have the car back to its sunny colors for the Boston Parade anyway — why not bring it home to Daytona where it had made a name for all 914s to come?

But time got away from him and the four-week deadline turned into three weeks, then two . . . suddenly it was time to buckle down or bail out.

Thursday, ten days before the event and seven days before they would have to leave, Wigglesworth got down to work. The next week would be a blur to the Wigglesworth family and devoted friends. Gary, Jr., 25, and Craig, 22, helped with the mechanical and paint details, while 18-year-old Dawn and her boyfriend, Morgan, took care of the number decals. Wife Gail ran errands and kept the crew fed.

Bright and early Thursday morning the crew drove, pushed, towed and carried customers' cars to other hollows of the warehouse and tucked Porsche pieces out of the way to make room for the patient. Clients would have to wait: these people had a mission. The silver bullet was carefully brought in, prepped and expeditiously attacked from all sides.

Dismantling the car proved relatively easy, while the details Wigglesworth insisted upon started causing trouble early on. Late Thursday afternoon, when the team was about to give up on finding the proper size STP sticker, Wigglesworth remembered seeing

one identical to the one he needed on a Richard Petty car at a Valley Forge sprint car trade show the week before. He called Petty's office and the receptionist, caught up in his efforts, not only found him the right sticker, but left work early to overnight-mail it to him.

By Friday, the crew (including friend Roger Ilgen, copier salesman by day, sander and stripper by night) had stripped the silver paint. The next hurdle was to match the original race colors. "Whoever painted the car silver did too good a job," Wigglesworth says. "We only found a small chip of the original yellow beneath the windshield wiper mechanism." Like a precious donor organ, the chip, along with a less-rare orange chip, were rushed to Dennis Berkheimer at BAP's, a paint supplier in Lewisberry, Pennsylvania, for matching. Berkheimer duped the chips and PPG provided the Delstar paint and materials for the project.

Wigglesworth constantly referred to old photos to help recreate the racer. Fortunately, about a year ago, Jerry Huffman cut heart strings with some of his memorabilia and sent photos that proved helpful to the recreation. Even more useful, however, were photos sent by PCAer Harry Bytzek of King City, Ontario, in response to an ad Wigglesworth had been running in PANO. Bytzek's photos were from the enduro itself.

Saturday, the Rumburg family, race friends, joined in the chore of sand, sand, sand, and in the wee hours of Sunday morning, four days before they'd have to pack up and leave — they were still sanding. People buzzed around the garage like bees intent on their labor. A few free hands spent Sunday preparing the rocker panel and the fiberglass bumpers, and carefully redoing the interior with an original-look-alike trunk-type carpet. Time ticked away relentlessly.

On Monday, the paint arrived from BAP's, but Wigglesworth wasn't happy with the sealer — too much orange peel in it — so they carefully sanded some more.

The lights, too, were becoming a problem. Wigglesworth had looked for several years, but couldn't find anyone who knew exactly what type they had been. "I felt the lights would make the car, and would have been happy with anything close," he concedes. "Then it dawned on me that I'd been looking for Cibies several years ago and all roads led to SportAuto in Marietta, Georgia."

He called down for help and was surprised to find Charlton Jones, the person who actually mounted the lights for Duval, Meaney and Gregg for the tenth Daytona. But Jones couldn't remember exactly what kind of lights he installed, nor how Duval wanted them mounted. "They were all different," he told Wigglesworth. "Some guys were particular and some couldn't have cared less." Wigglesworth sent a photo

to help jar his memory.

By Monday night, the car was Canadian Sunoco yellow. Two days to go.

Tuesday. The tacky paint was carefully taped to make room for the orange. The new factory balsa-wood hood and deck lid, which Wigglesworth had found after several years of searching, were also inflamed with the team yellow. Meanwhile, Jones not only remembered what kind of lights were used, but where he could find some.

On Wednesday, miracles were performed. The bleary-eyed crew (friends now taking off work from real jobs), had 12 hours to countdown and no end was in sight. Wigglesworth had been given complimentary passes to attend anything and everything at Daytona, and he really wanted to see the Thursday night practice. Problem was, he had to be at the gate Thursday by 5 p.m. to get in, so, figuring an 18-hour drive, they wanted to leave Pennsylvania by 6 p.m. Wednesday to get there and through the entry paperwork.

At 10:30 a.m. the lights arrived along with an added bonus — some decals that belonged on the back. Mike Randall spent the next 12 hours rigging them up per Jones' instructions.

The place looked like Santa's workshop two days before Christmas. While one worker furiously spray-painted black pieces blacker, another drilled holes in the hoods for the aluminum reinforcements, fabricated by yet another elf. Santa Wigglesworth, intent on perfection, retreated to his Recaro-seat-turned-office-chair to make two cross-continent phone calls to 914/6 GT owners to verify the proper screw to be used on the rear trunk lid hold downs. Someone, no one's sure who anymore, installed the passenger seat and the shoulder harness. Hardly a word was spoken except for occasional orders, yelps, curses and the final call — "Gary" — from a worker looking for approval of a finished project.

Vernon Gehron, an employee of Wigglesworth's, miraculously transformed the rear end and transmission from autocross to original, changed over the exhaust system, replaced the Solo II gas tank with the endurance tank, and changed the entire fuel system — all on Wednesday, all by himself.

The clock ticked past nine that night and the original rims and tires still leaned against the wall. "I was sure we weren't going to make it for the night practice," Wigglesworth says, "but my son kept telling me we could."

The exhausted family pulled out of York at midnight in their motor home with a happy little 914/6 in the back, paint still soft.

Daytona or bust

Craig was right and they made it to Daytona with time to spare. Most of the day Friday was spent on

last minute details, particularly applying the stickers — the finishing touch. Wigglesworth never did find the correct size Ferodo decal. Any original stickers they did have, including the 1971 Daytona inspection sticker, were flawlessly laser-duplicated. Only those of you reading this article will know that there's a difference.

Contacts were made for future restoration details and pictures were taken with old friends, like Gregg's #59 (now owned by Bob Snodgrass). The hard work had its rewards; Wigglesworth's car proved to be more original than the other 914/6 GTs present.

Wigglesworth sat with his car and 29 others (12 of them Porsches) most of the day Saturday in the Manufacturer's Midway section of the infield at Daytona, located east of the Pedro Rodriguez curve. That afternoon he ran the track during the gridding of this year's racers. "The short chute is faster than I could have imagined," he gleams. "And it feels like you're going to slide right off the oval." To top the day off, Derek Meluzio, son of Central Pennsylvania PCAer Don Meluzio, found Wigglesworth a 1/43rd scale model of his car as it looked when it raced at Sebring.

"I know what it's like to have died and gone to heaven," Wigglesworth says of his weekend. "Everything fell into place so perfectly — it was

meant to be."

Wigglesworth plans just a few more details for the Boston Parade, like the number light, a twin-plug engine and having the interiors painted light ivory, as they would have been on race day in 1971. He also hopes to track down Duval before the July event. Club members will be able to view the car at the Parade concours, or watch for a yellow-orange blur at the autocross, where he'll be looking for the fastest time of the day.

For now, the little "914/6 VW Porsche" sits patiently in a narrow, cement-block garage under a bare light bulb, behind a customer's rusty green 1968 912.

Wigglesworth sifts through hundreds of photos and clippings referring to his racer that are heaped and spilling off his dining room table desk. He hands me a copy of the import sticker while he answers the phone. "Racing car to be used by resident driver in competition with non-resident," it reads. Thirty-nine thousand Deutschmarks. Rate of exchange: .2791.

"That was a guy from Canada," Wigglesworth says with a grin as he puts the receiver down and dances back to me like a sneaky little kid. "He thinks he knows where I may be able to get Duval's race memorabilia — maybe the trophy!"

Wigglesworth deserves it after his race. ❄



The "E" and "H" in Porsche were placed closer together than Wigglesworth would have liked, but are precisely as photos show they were 20 years ago.