

BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Lerwick Observatory

Monthly Magnetic Bulletin

December 2008

08/12/LE



SHETLAND ISLANDS



British Geological Survey

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

LERWICK OBSERVATORY MAGNETIC DATA

1. Introduction

This bulletin is published to meet the needs of both commercial and academic users of geomagnetic data. Magnetic observatory data is presented as a series of plots of one-minute, hourly and daily values, followed by tabulations of monthly values, geomagnetic activity indices and reports of rapid variations. The operation of the observatory and presentation of data are described in the rest of this section.

Enquiries about the data should be addressed to:

National Geomagnetic Service
British Geological Survey
Murchison House, West Mains Road
Edinburgh EH9 3LA
Scotland, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 131 667 1000
Fax: +44 (0) 131 650 0265
E-mail: orba@bgs.ac.uk
Internet: www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk

2. Position

Lerwick Observatory, one of the three geomagnetic observatories operated and maintained in the UK by BGS, is situated on a ridge of high ground about 2.5 km to the SW of the port of Lerwick in Shetland. The observatory co-ordinates are:

Geographic: 60°08.0'N 358°49.0'E
Geomagnetic: 61°59.3'N 88°56.8'E
Height above mean sea level: 85 m

The geomagnetic co-ordinates are calculated using the 10th generation International Geomagnetic Reference Field at epoch 2008.5.

3. The Observatory Operation

3.1 GDAS

The observatory operates under the control of the Geomagnetic Data Acquisition System (GDAS), which was developed by BGS staff, installed in 2002, and became fully operational in January 2003. The system operates under the control of data acquisition software running on QNX computers, which control the data logging and communications.

There are two sets of sensors used for making magnetic measurements. A tri-axial linear-core fluxgate magnetometer, manufactured by the Danish Meteorological Institute, is used to measure the variations in the horizontal (H) and vertical (Z) components of the field. The third sensor is oriented perpendicular to these, and measures variations, which are proportional to the changes in declination (D). Measurements are made at a rate of 1 Hz.

In addition to the fluxgate sensors there is a proton precession magnetometer (PPM) making measurements of the absolute total field intensity (F) at a rate of 0.1Hz.

The raw unfiltered data are retrieved automatically via Internet connections to the BGS office in Edinburgh in near real-time. The fluxgate data are filtered to produce one-minute values using a 61-point cosine filter whilst the total field intensity samples are filtered using a 7-point cosine filter. These one-minute values are used to update the Geomagnetism Information and Forecast Service (GIFS), an on-line information system accessed via the World Wide Web at the address given in Section 1.1. GIFS also provides information on geomagnetic and solar activity.

3.2 Back-up Systems

There are two other fully independent identical systems, GDAS 2 and GDAS 3, operating at the observatory. The data from these are also processed in near real-time and used for quality control purposes. They can also be used to fill any gaps or replace any corrupt values in the primary system, GDAS 1.

3.3 Absolute Observations

The GDAS fluxgate magnetometers accurately measure variations in the components of the geomagnetic field, but not the absolute magnitudes. Two sets of absolute measurements of the field are made manually once per week. A fluxgate sensor mounted on a theodolite is used to determine D and inclination (I); the GDAS PPM measurements, with a site difference correction applied, are used for F . The absolute observations are used in conjunction with the GDAS variometer measurements to produce a continuous record of the absolute values of the geomagnetic field elements as if they had been measured at the observatory reference pillar.

4. Observatory Results

The data presented in the bulletin are in the form of plots and tabulations described in the following sections.

4.1 Absolute Observations

The absolute observation measurements made during the month are tabulated. Also included are the corresponding baseline values, which are the differences between the absolute measurements and the variometer measurements of D , H and Z (in the sense absolute–variometer). These are also plotted (markers) along with the derived preliminary daily baseline values (line) throughout the year. Daily mean differences between the measured absolute F and the F computed from the baseline corrected H and Z values are plotted in the fourth panel (in the sense measured–derived). The bottom panel shows the daily mean temperature in the fluxgate chamber.

4.2 Summary magnetograms

Small-scale magnetograms are plotted which allow the month's data to be viewed at a glance. They are plotted 16 days a page and show the variations in D , H and Z . The scales are shown on the right-hand side of the page. On disturbed days the scales are multiplied by a factor, which is indicated above the panel for that day. The variations are centred on the monthly mean value, shown on the left side of the page.

4.3 Magnetograms

The daily magnetograms are plotted using one-minute values of D , H and Z from the fluxgate sensors, with any gaps filled using back-up data. The magnetograms are plotted to a variable scale; scale bars are shown to the right of each plot. The absolute level (the monthly mean value) is indicated on the left side of the plots.

4.4 Hourly Mean Value Plots

Hourly mean values of D , H and Z for the past 12 months are plotted in 27-day segments corresponding to the Bartels solar rotation number. Magnetic disturbances associated with active regions on the surface of the Sun may recur after 27 days: the same is true for geomagnetically quiet intervals. Plotting the data in this way highlights this recurrence, and also illustrates seasonal and diurnal variations throughout the year.

4.5 Daily and Monthly Mean Values

Daily mean values of D , H , Z and F are plotted throughout the year. In addition, a table of monthly mean values of all the geomagnetic elements is provided. These values depend on accurate specification of the fluxgate sensor baselines. Provisional and definitive values are indicated in the table as **P** or **D** respectively. It is anticipated that provisional values will not be altered by more than a few nT or tenths of arcminutes before being made definitive.

4.6 Geomagnetic activity indices

The Observatory K index. This summarises geomagnetic activity at an observatory by assigning a code, an integer in the range 0 to 9, to each 3-hour Universal Time (UT) interval. The index for each 3-hour UT interval is determined from the ranges in H and in D (scaled in nT), with allowance made for the regular (undisturbed) diurnal variation. The conversion from range to an index value is made using a quasi-logarithmic scale, with the scale values dependent on the geomagnetic latitude of the observatory. The K index retains the local time (LT) and seasonal dependence of activity associated with the position of the observatory.

The provisional aa index. A number of 3-hour geomagnetic indices are computed by combining K indices from networks of observatories to characterise global activity levels and to eliminate LT and seasonal effects. The simplest of these is the aa index, computed using the K indices from two approximately antipodal observatories: Hartland in the UK and Canberra in Australia. The aa index is calculated from linearisations of the Hartland and Canberra K indices, and has units of nT. The daily mean value of aa (denoted Aa), the mean values of aa for the intervals 00-12UT and 12-24UT and the daily mean values for Hartland alone (Aa_n) and Canberra alone (Aa_s) are tabulated.

Although the aa index is based on data from only two observatories, provided averages over 12 hours or longer are used, the index is strongly correlated with the ap and am indices, which are derived using data from more extensive observatory networks.

The aa indices listed in this publication are provisional only; the definitive values are published by the International Service for Geomagnetic Indices, CRPE/CNET - CNRS, 4 Avenue de Neptune, F-94107 Saint Maur Cedex, France.

4.7 Rapid Variations

Charged particles stream from the Sun in the solar wind. The solar wind interacts with the geomagnetic field to create a cavity, the magnetosphere, in which the field is confined. When a region of enhanced velocity and/or density in the solar wind arrives at the dayside boundary of the magnetosphere (at about 10 earth radii) the boundary is pushed towards the Earth. Currents set up on the boundary of the magnetosphere can cause an abrupt change in the geomagnetic field measured on the ground and this is recorded on observatory magnetograms as a Sudden Impulse (SI). If, following an SI, there is a change in the rhythm of activity, the SI is termed a Storm Sudden Commencement (SSC). A classical magnetic storm exhibiting initial, main and recovery phases (shown by, for instance, the *Dst* ring current index) can often occur after a SSC, in which case the start of the storm is taken as the time of the SSC.

Solar flares, seen at optical wavelengths as a sudden brightening of a small region of the Sun's surface, are also responsible for increased X-ray emissions. The X-rays cause increased ionisation in the ionosphere, which leads to absorption of short-wave radio signals. On an observatory magnetogram a Solar Flare Effect (SFE), or "crochet" may be observed. This is an enhancement to the diurnal variation of the order of 10 nT, lasting about an hour.

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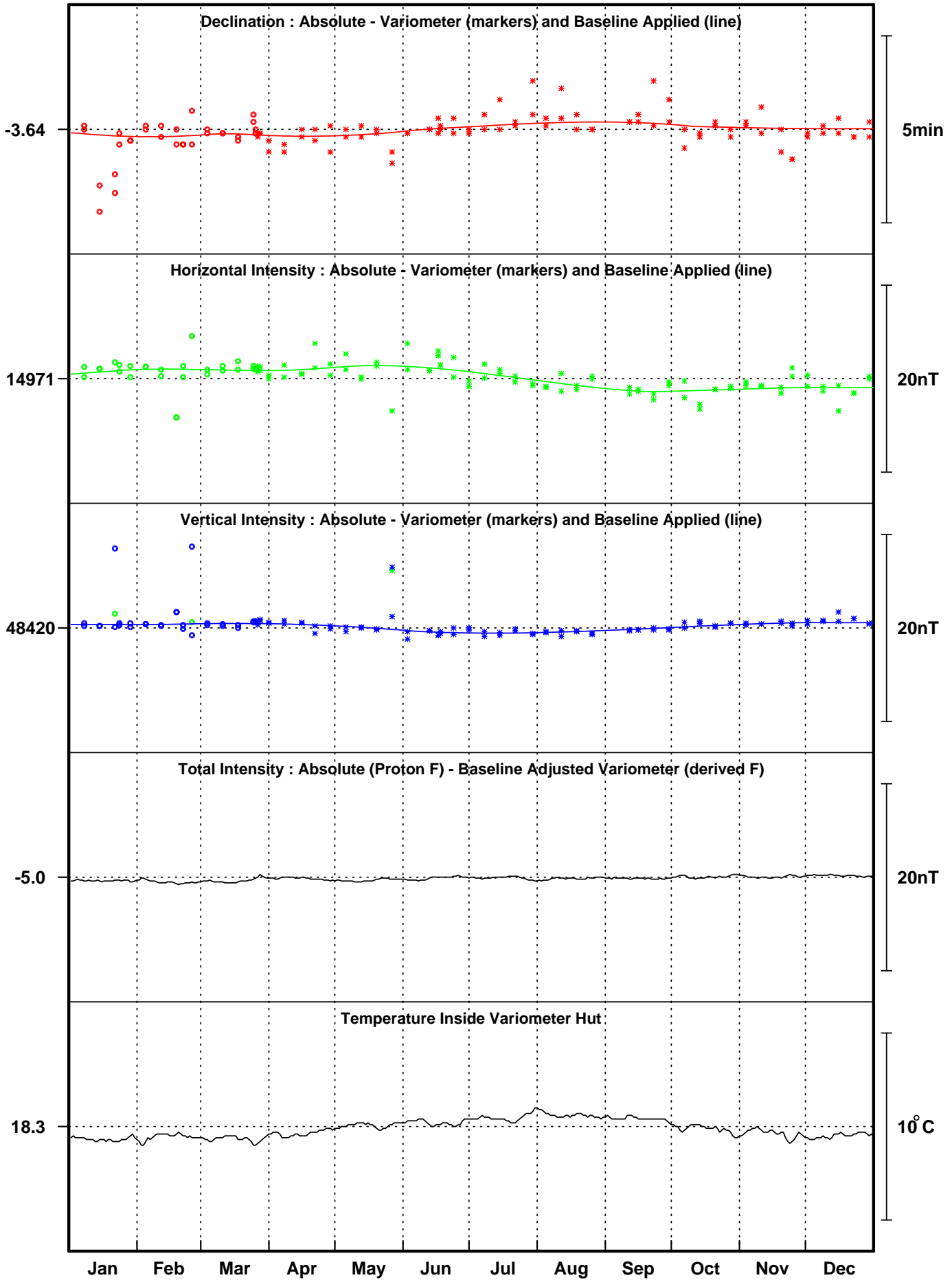
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LERWICK OBSERVATORY

ABSOLUTE OBSERVATIONS

Date	Day Number	DECLINATION			INCLINATION							Observer
		Time (UT)	Absolute (°)	Baseline (°)	Time (UT)	Inclination (°)	Total Field Intensity (nT)	H Absolute (nT)	H Baseline (nT)	Z Absolute (nT)	Z Baseline (nT)	
01-Dec-08	336	09:35	-3.2278	-3.6200	09:54	72.8151	50729.9	14988.4	14964.6	48465.1	48419.7	WH
01-Dec-08	336	10:07	-3.2376	-3.6217	10:23	72.8144	50728.2	14988.6	14965.8	48463.3	48419.3	WH
08-Dec-08	343	09:39	-3.2312	-3.6167	07:41	72.8158	50733.0	14988.8	14964.1	48468.3	48419.7	WH
08-Dec-08	343	10:08	-3.2344	-3.6200	10:24	72.8170	50733.1	14987.8	14964.6	48468.6	48419.6	WH
15-Dec-08	350	09:13	-3.2277	-3.6200	09:30	72.8108	50731.3	14992.5	14964.7	48465.3	48419.6	PK
15-Dec-08	350	09:45	-3.2271	-3.6133	10:08	72.8154	50730.3	14988.4	14962.0	48465.5	48420.6	PK
22-Dec-08	357	09:24	-3.2240	-3.6217	09:38	72.8069	50733.3	14996.4	14963.9	48466.2	48419.9	PK
22-Dec-08	357	09:51	-3.2252	-3.6217	10:05	72.8080	50733.8	14995.6	14963.9	48467.0	48419.9	PK
29-Dec-08	364	09:09	-3.2097	-3.6150	09:27	72.8088	50731.4	14994.3	14965.4	48464.9	48419.4	PK
29-Dec-08	364	09:41	-3.2197	-3.6217	09:54	72.8109	50731.3	14992.4	14965.7	48465.4	48419.3	PK

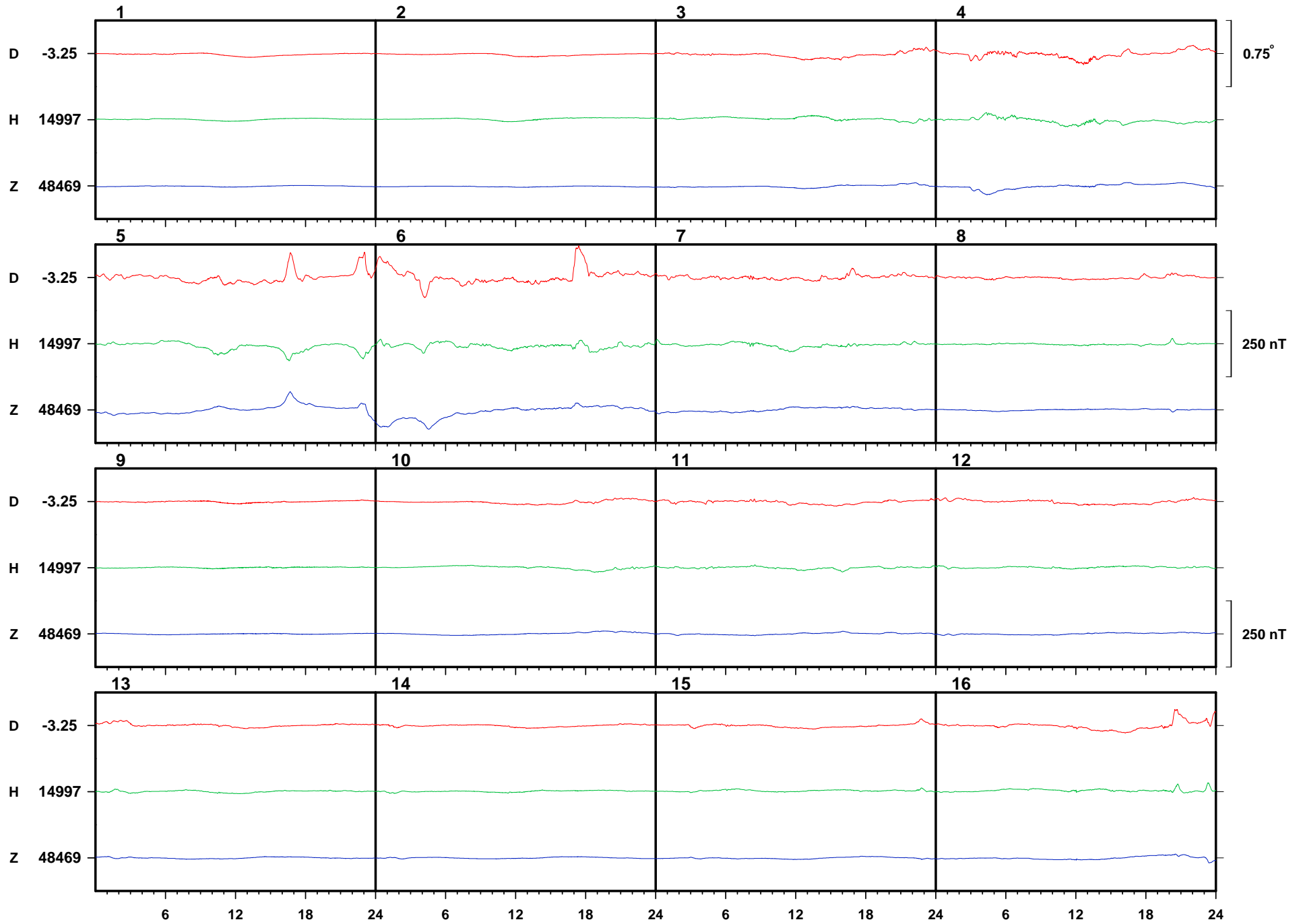
Lerwick 2008

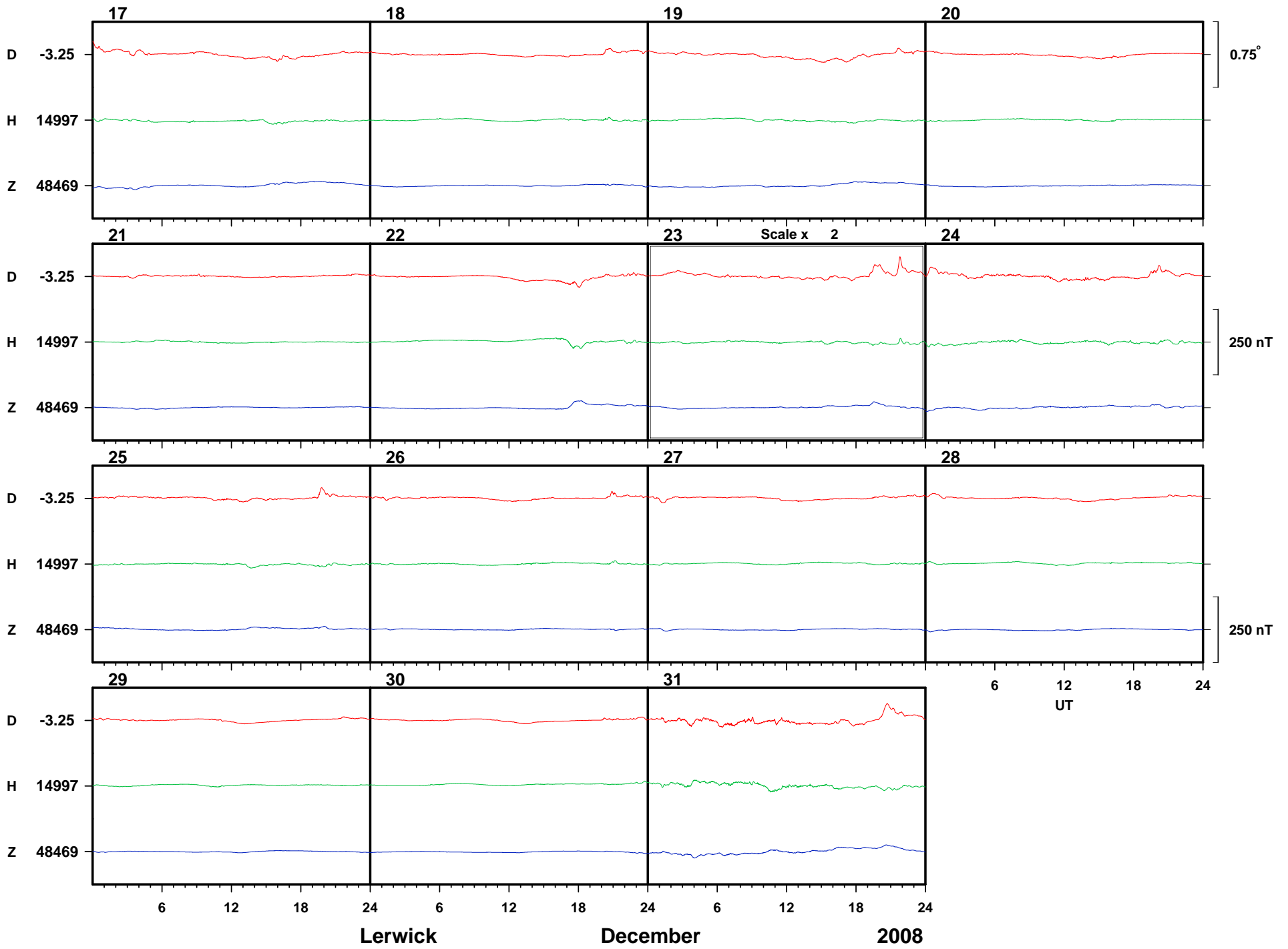


Lerwick

December

2008

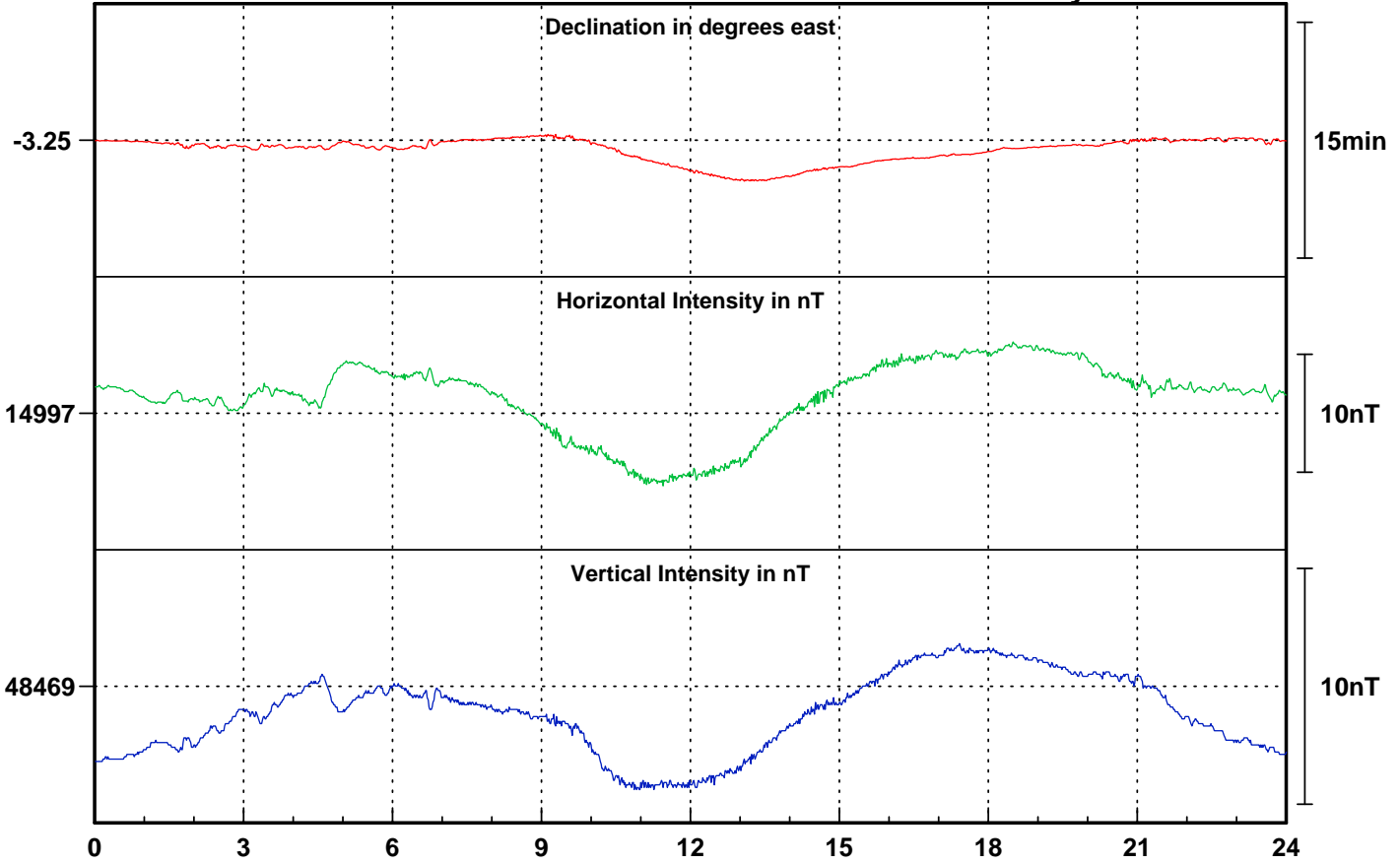




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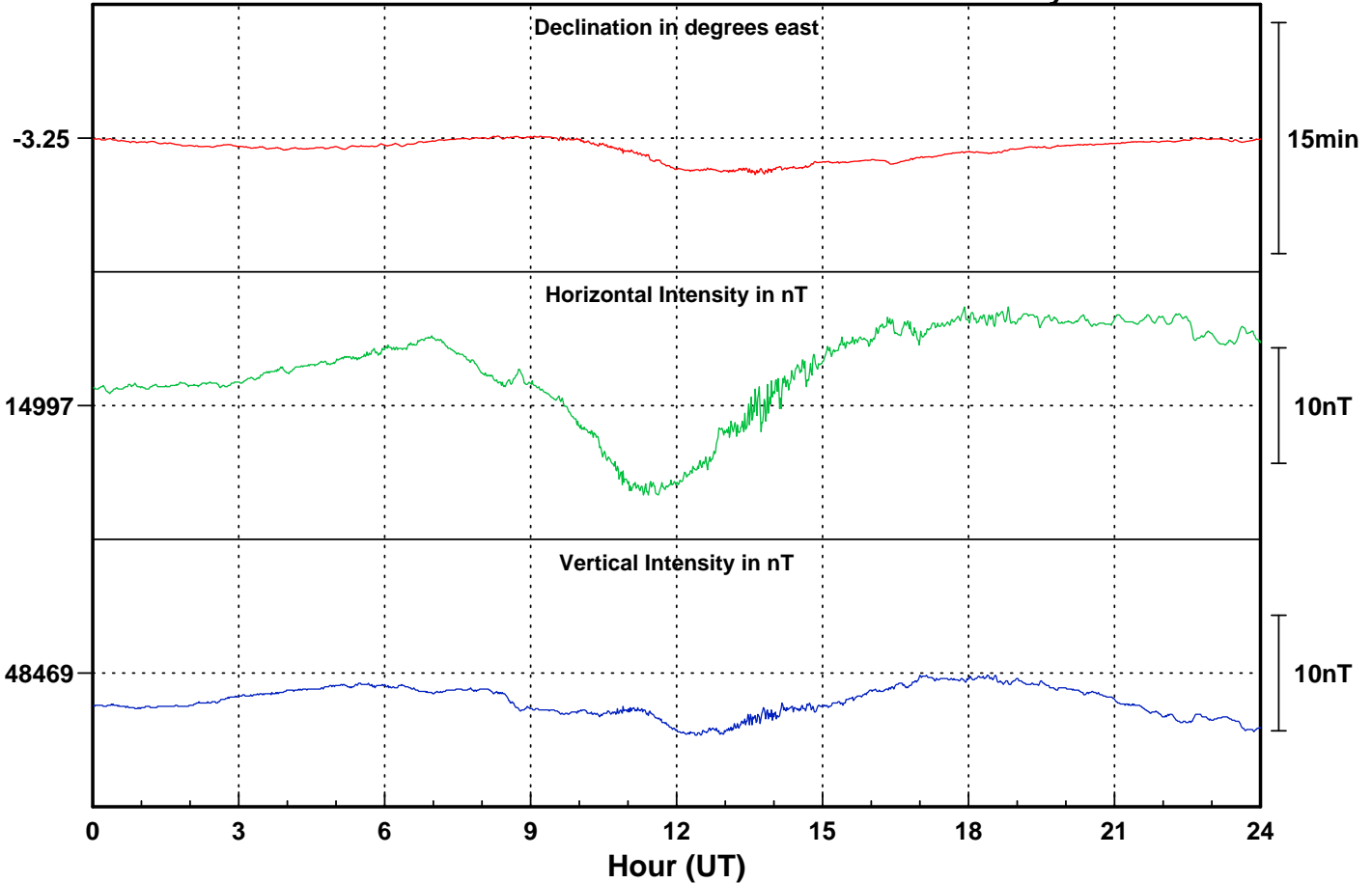
Lerwick

Day number: 336



Date: 02-12-2008

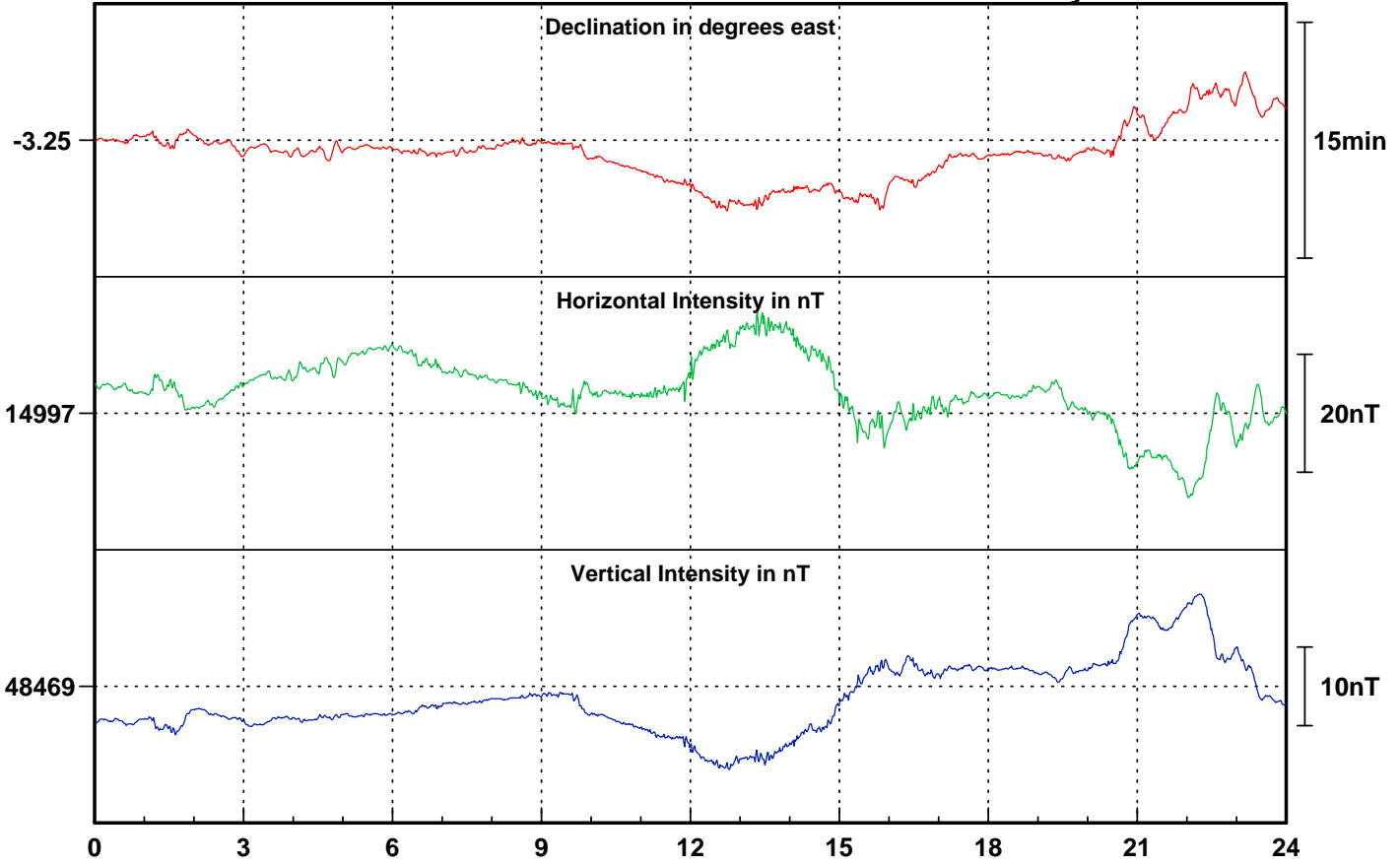
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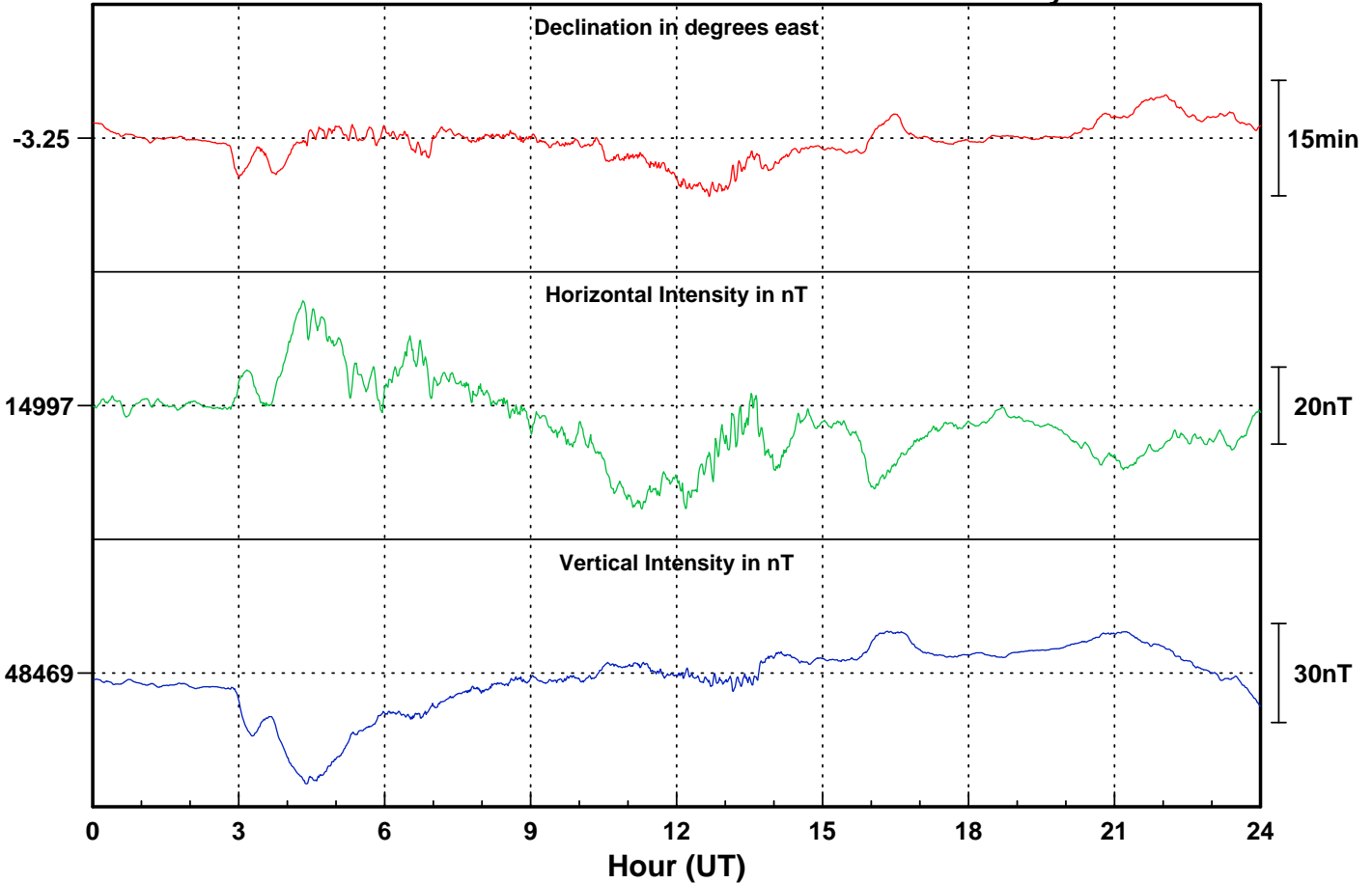
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Day number: 338



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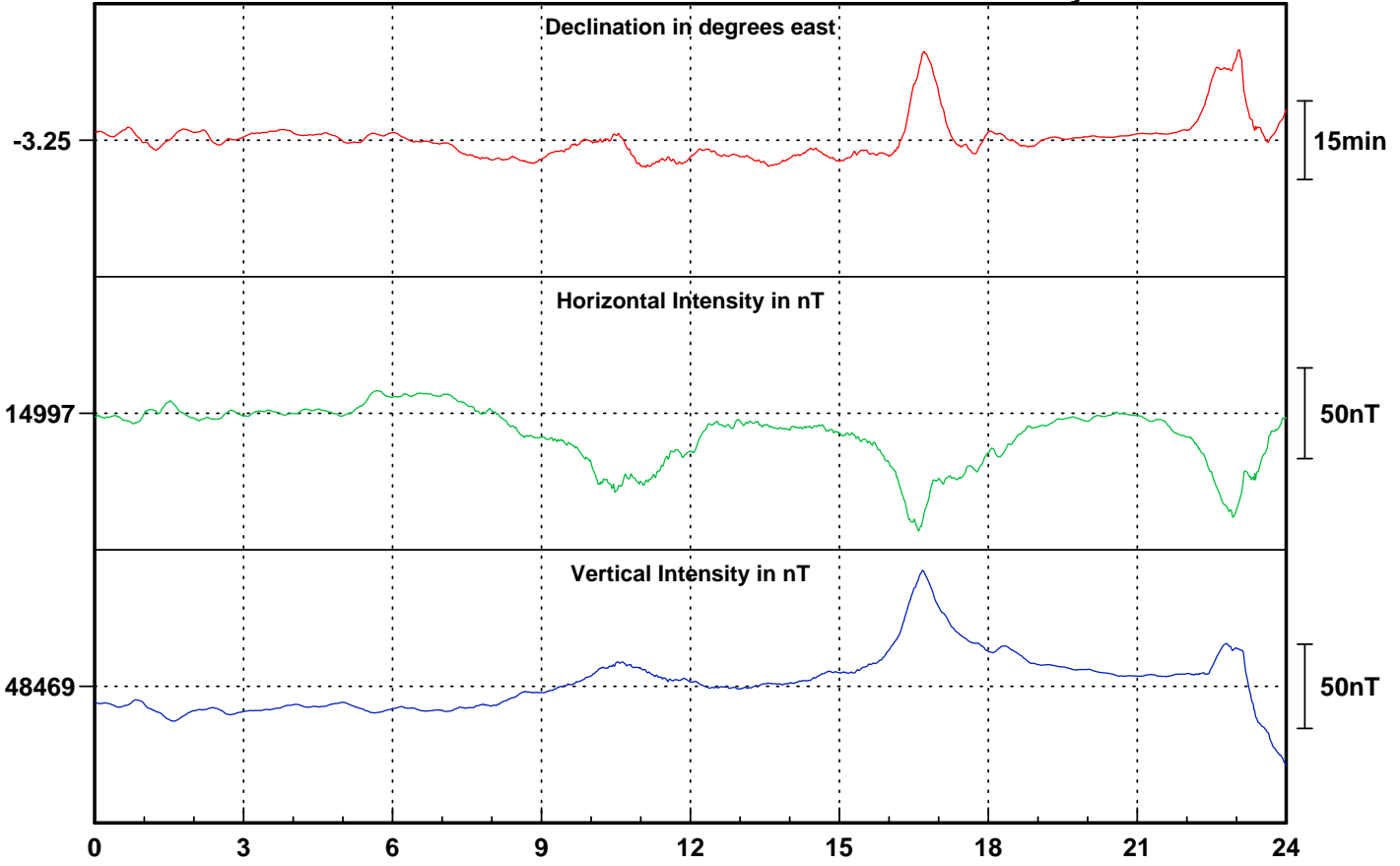
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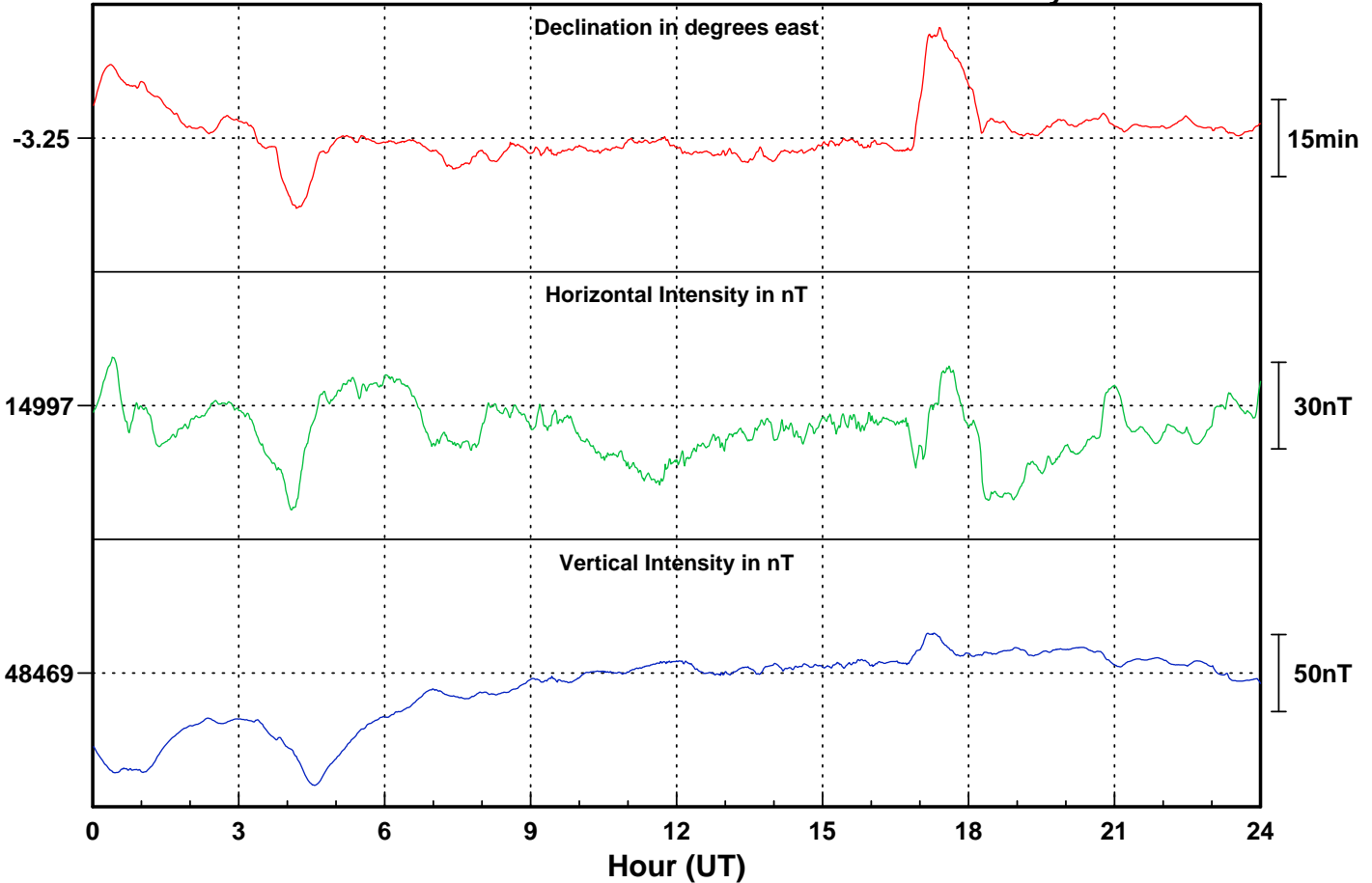
Lerwick

Day number: 340



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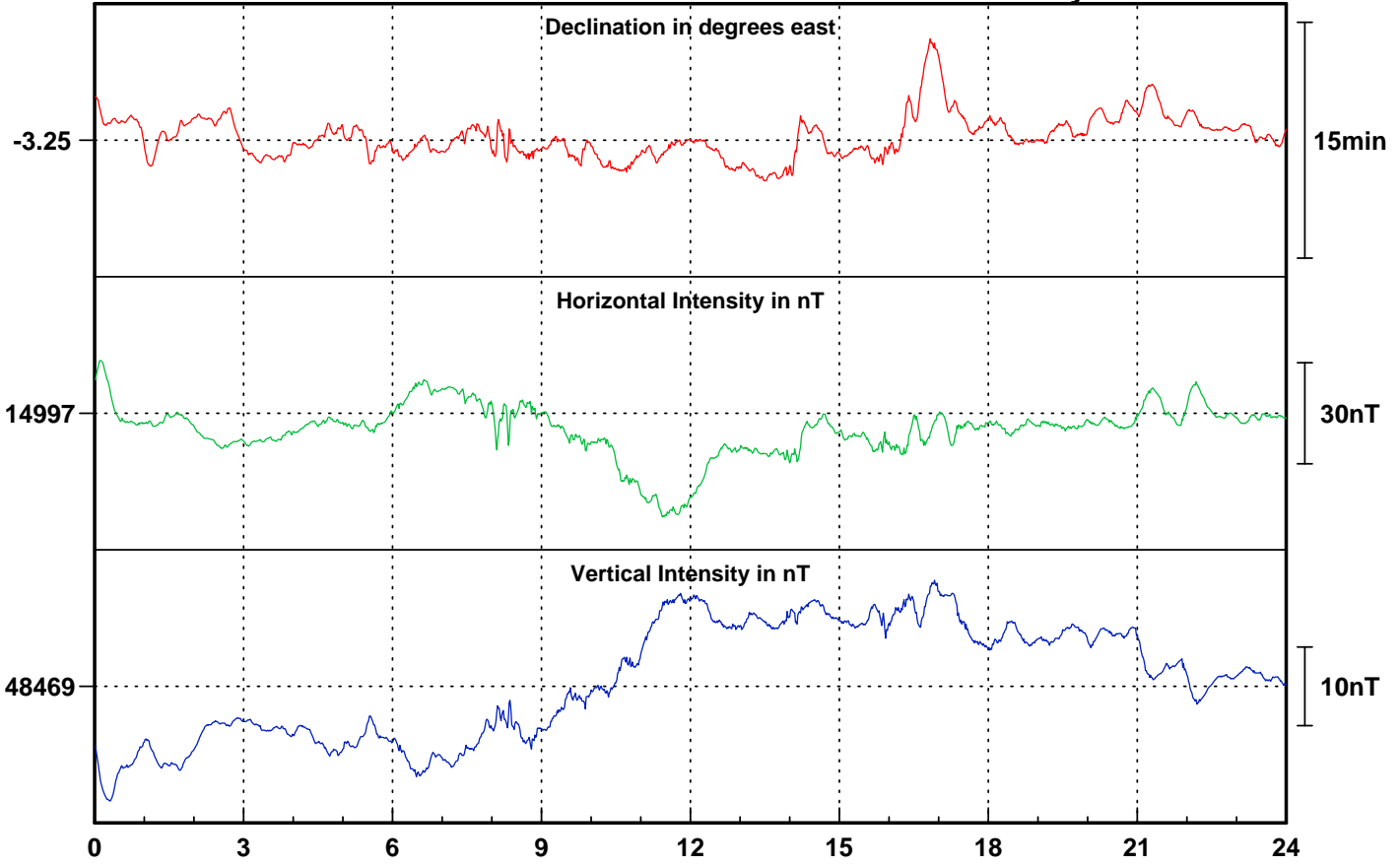
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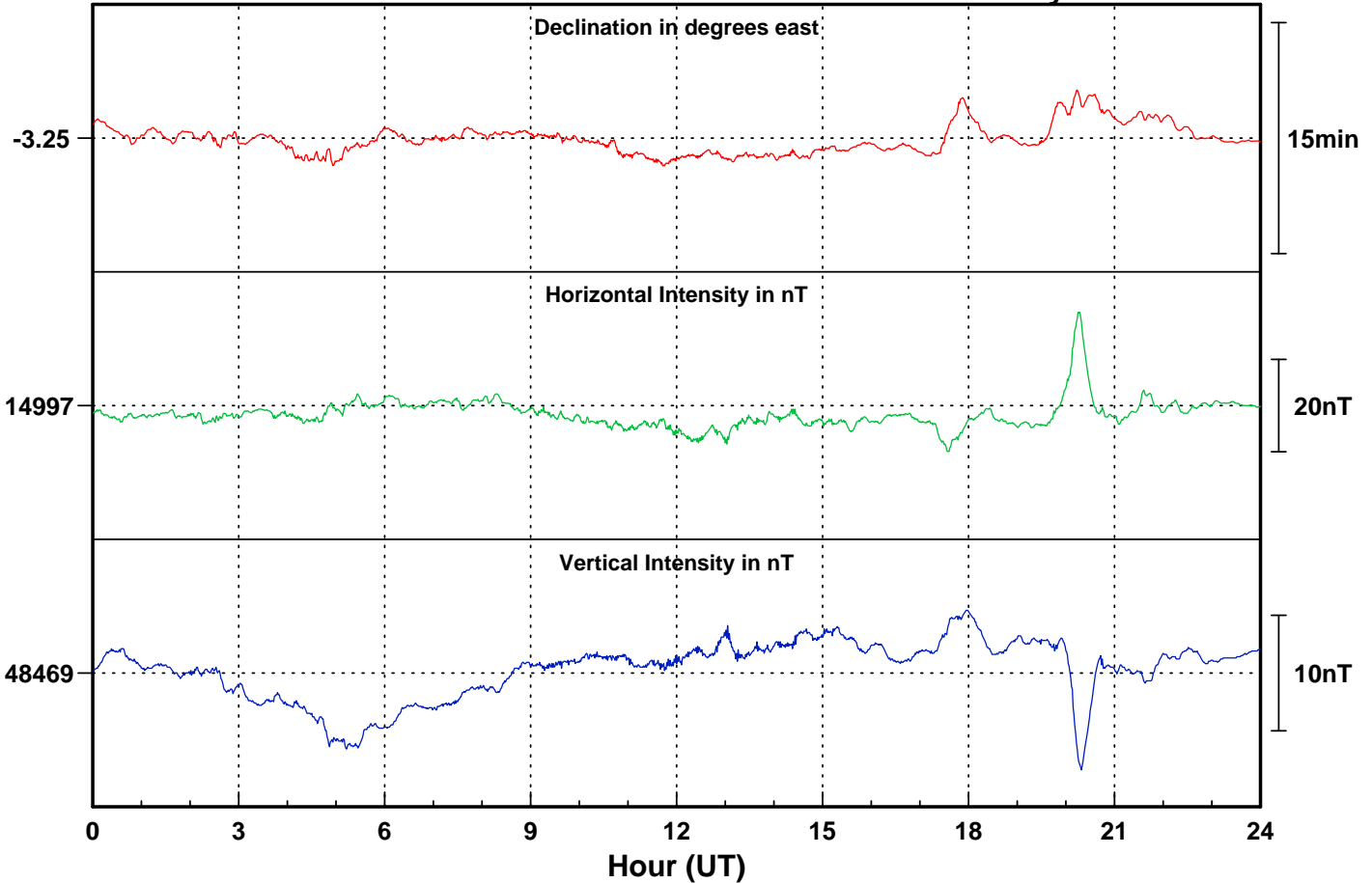
Lerwick

Day number: 342



Date: 08-12-2008

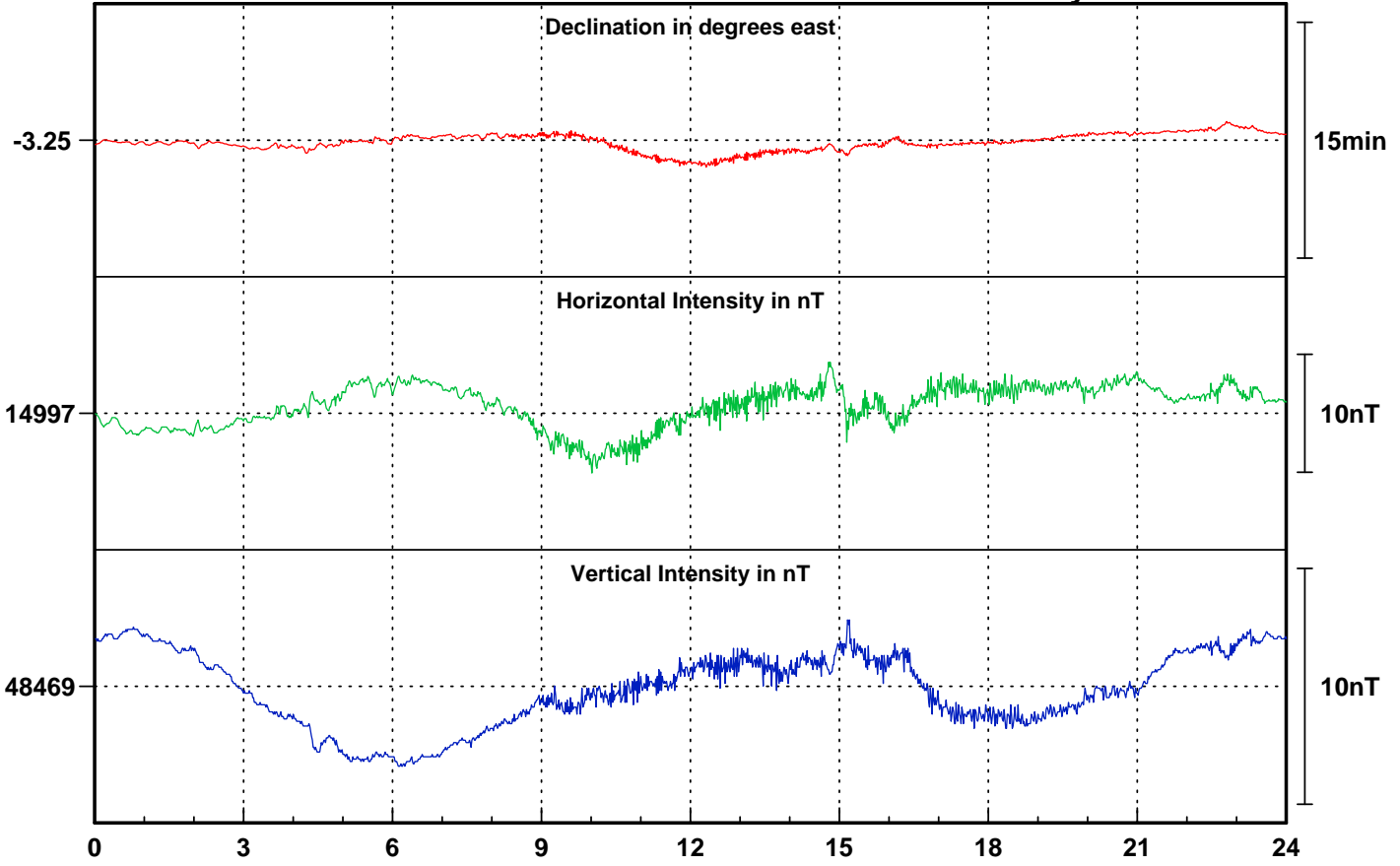
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Date: 09-12-2008

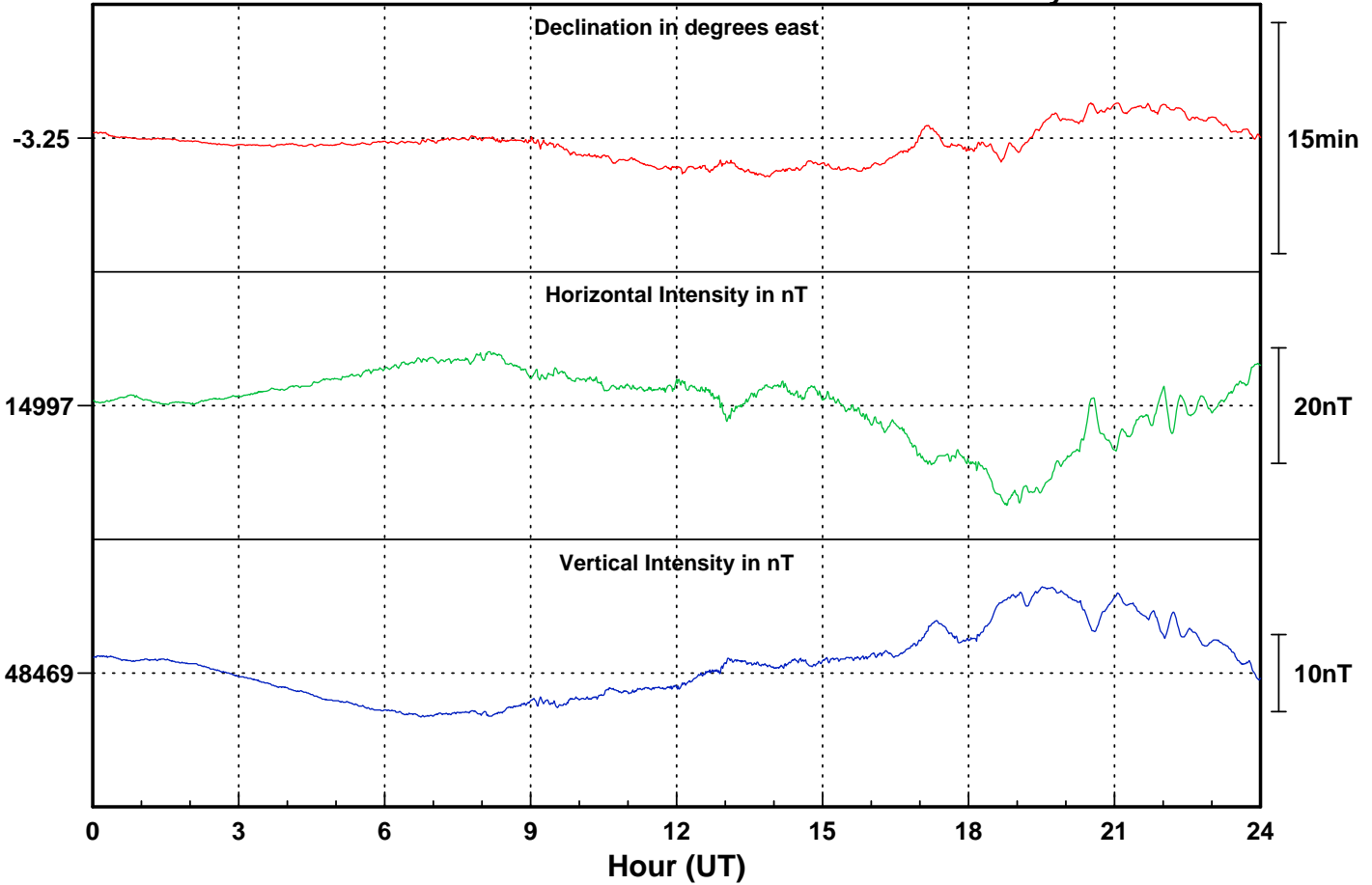
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Day number: 344



Date: 10-12-2008

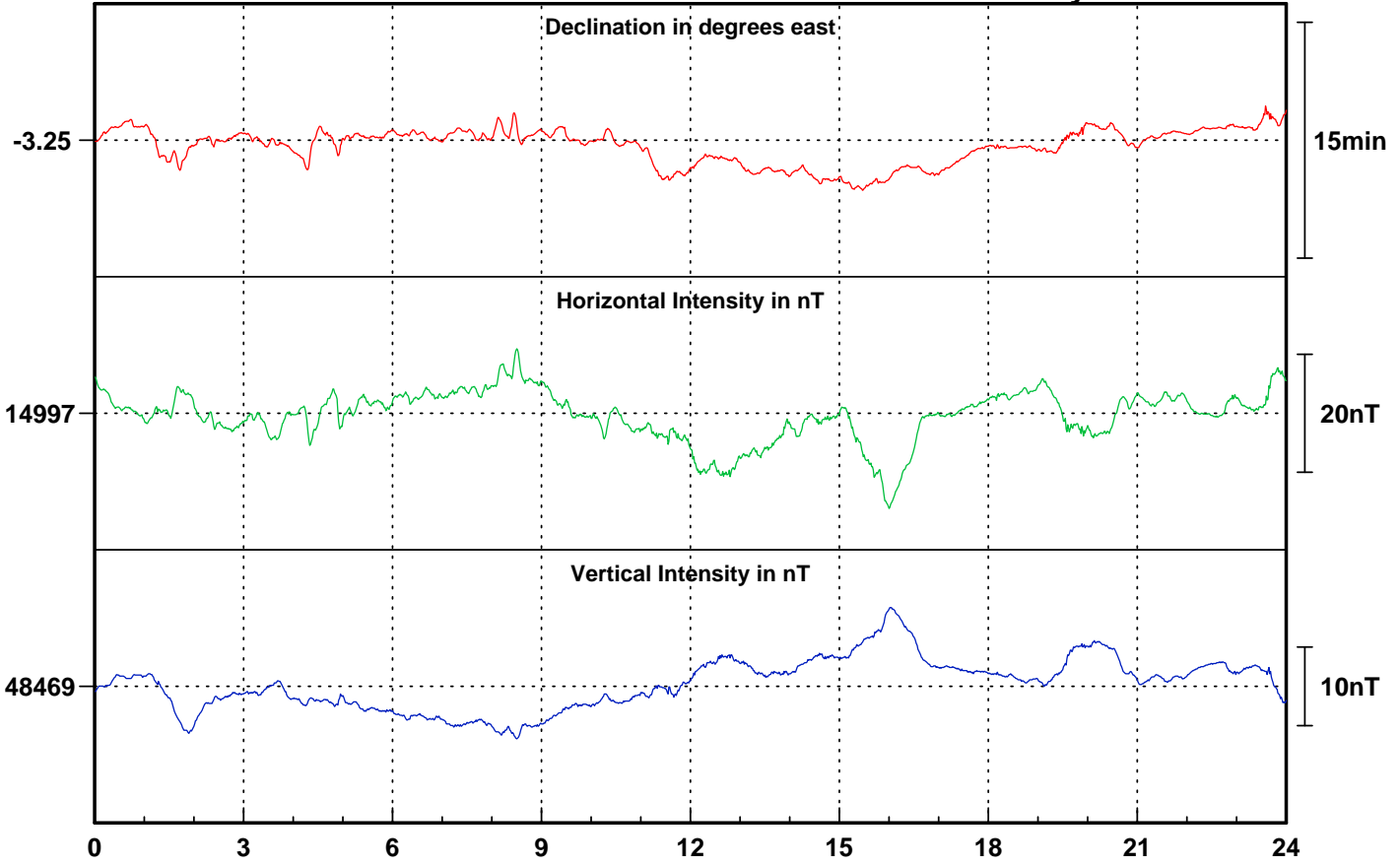
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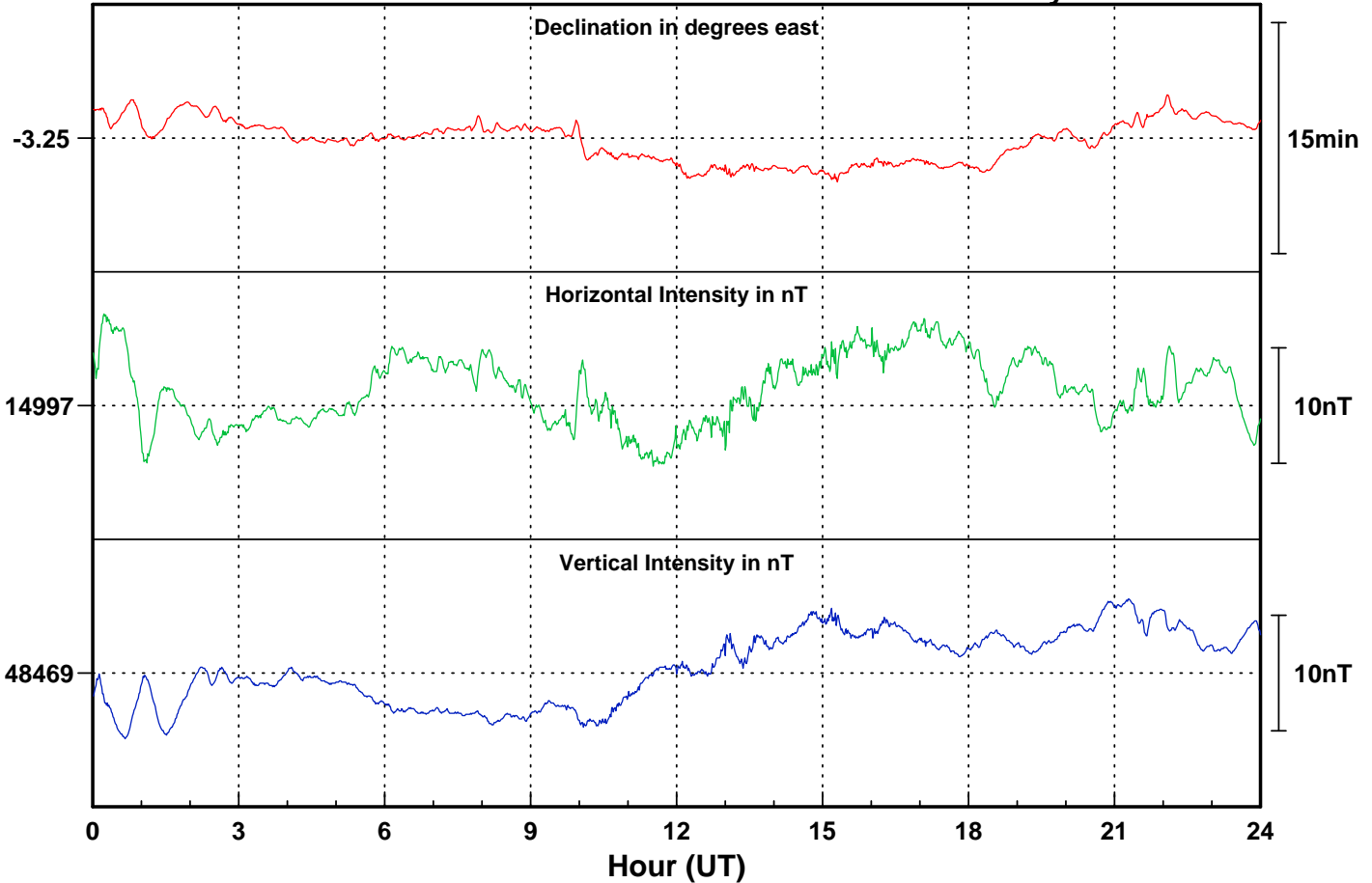
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Day number: 346



Date: 12-12-2008

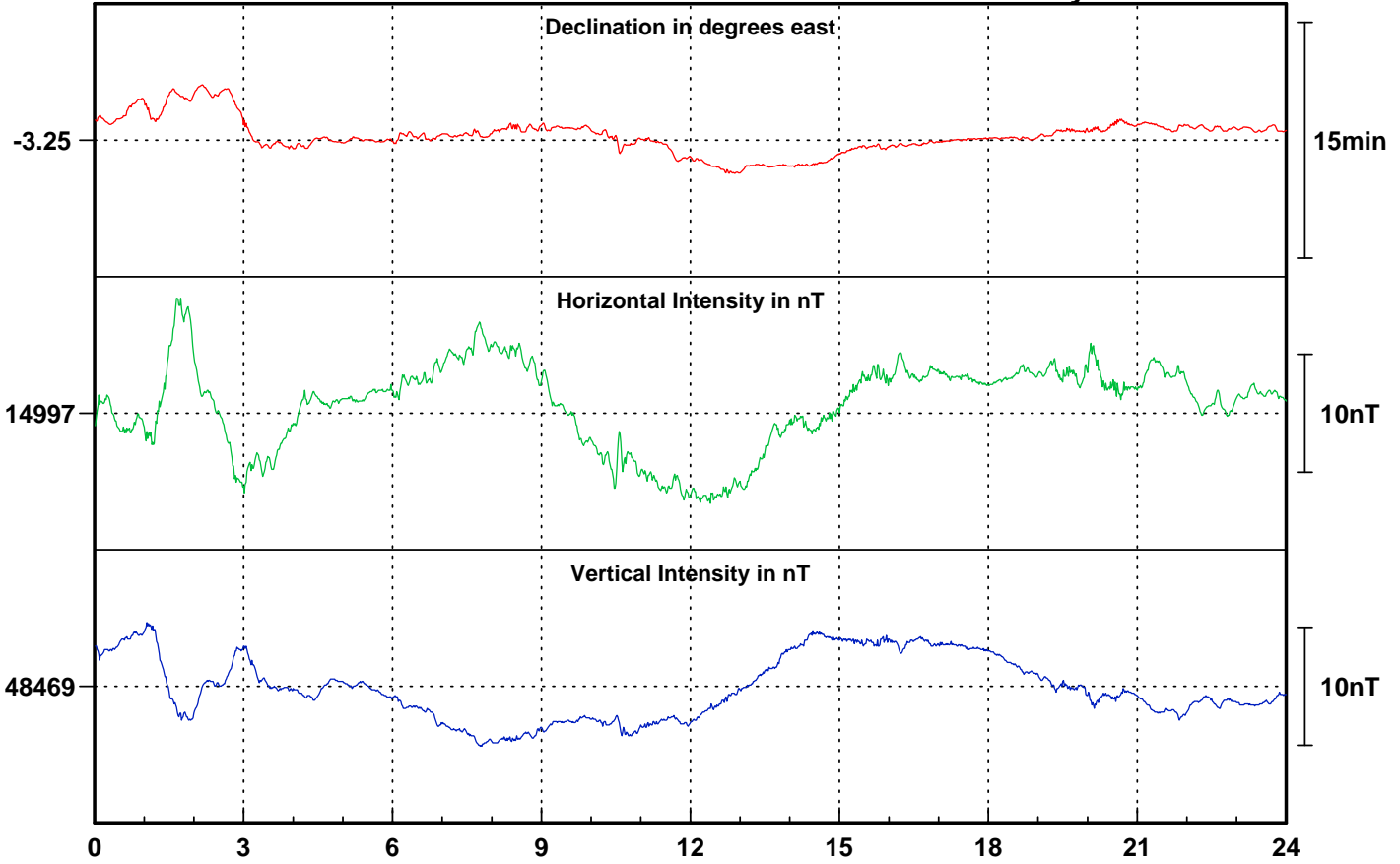
Day number: 347



Date: 13-12-2008

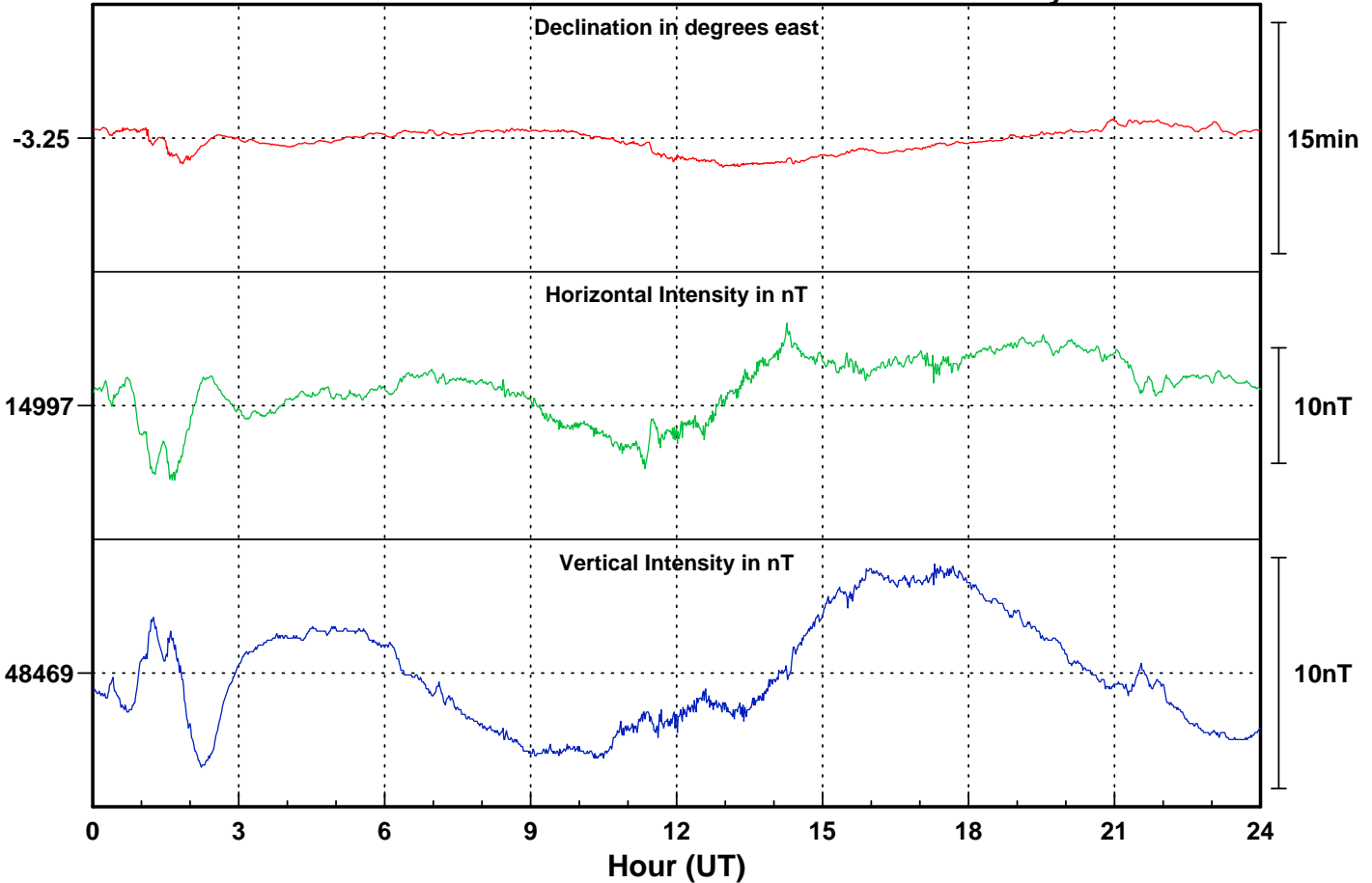
Lerwick

Day number: 348



Date: 14-12-2008

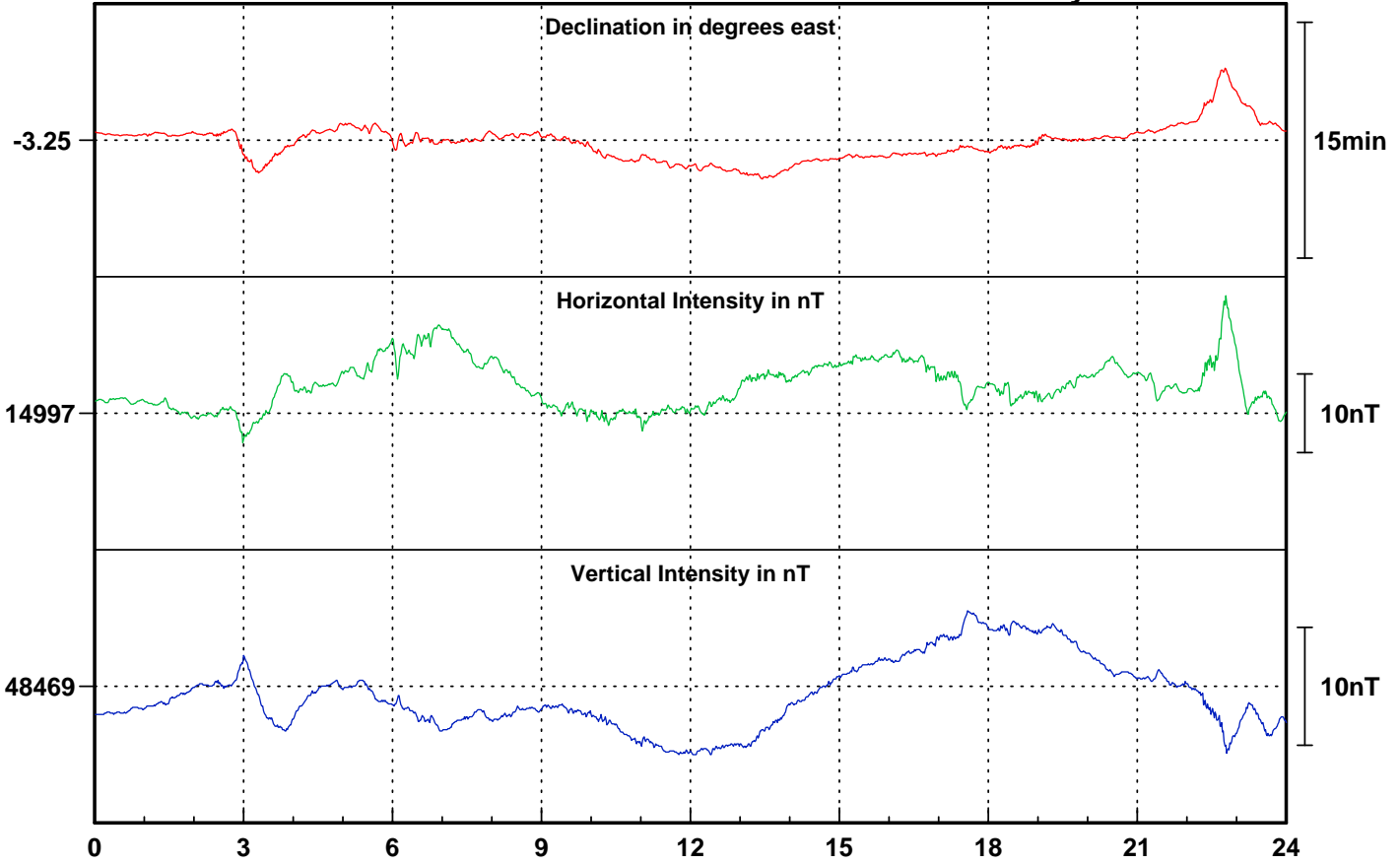
Day number: 349



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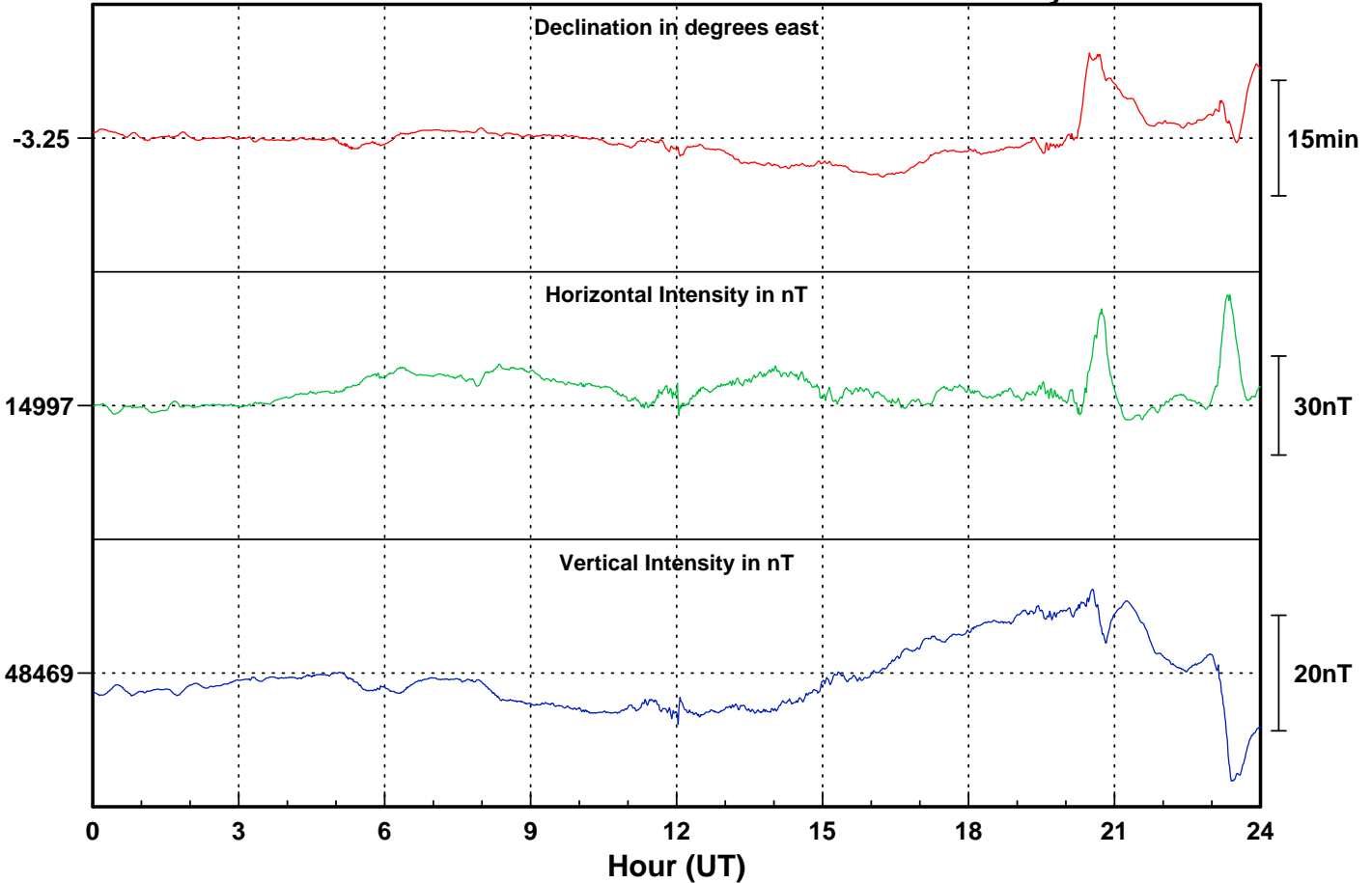
Lerwick

Day number: 350



Date: 16-12-2008

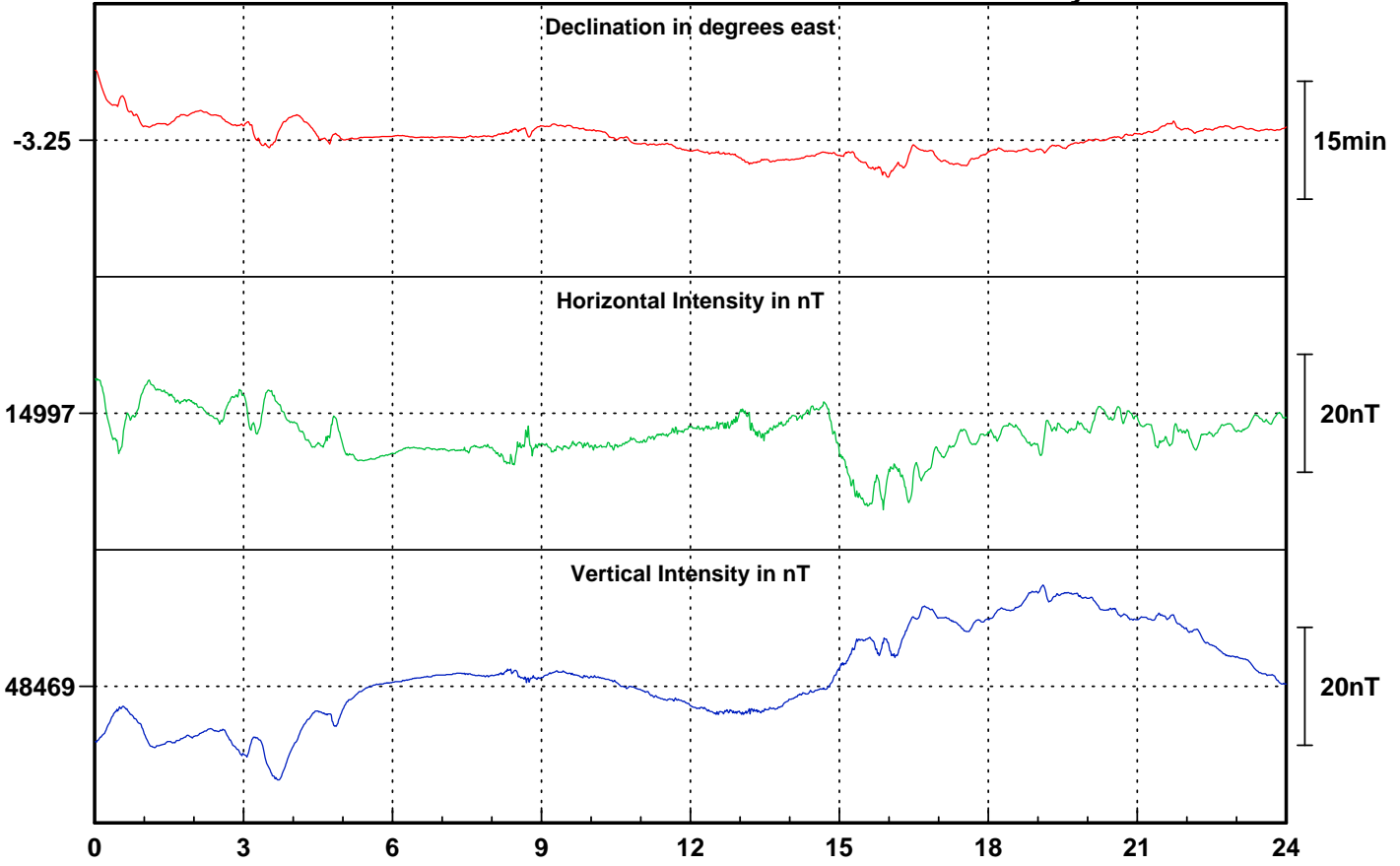
Day number: 351



Date: 17-12-2008

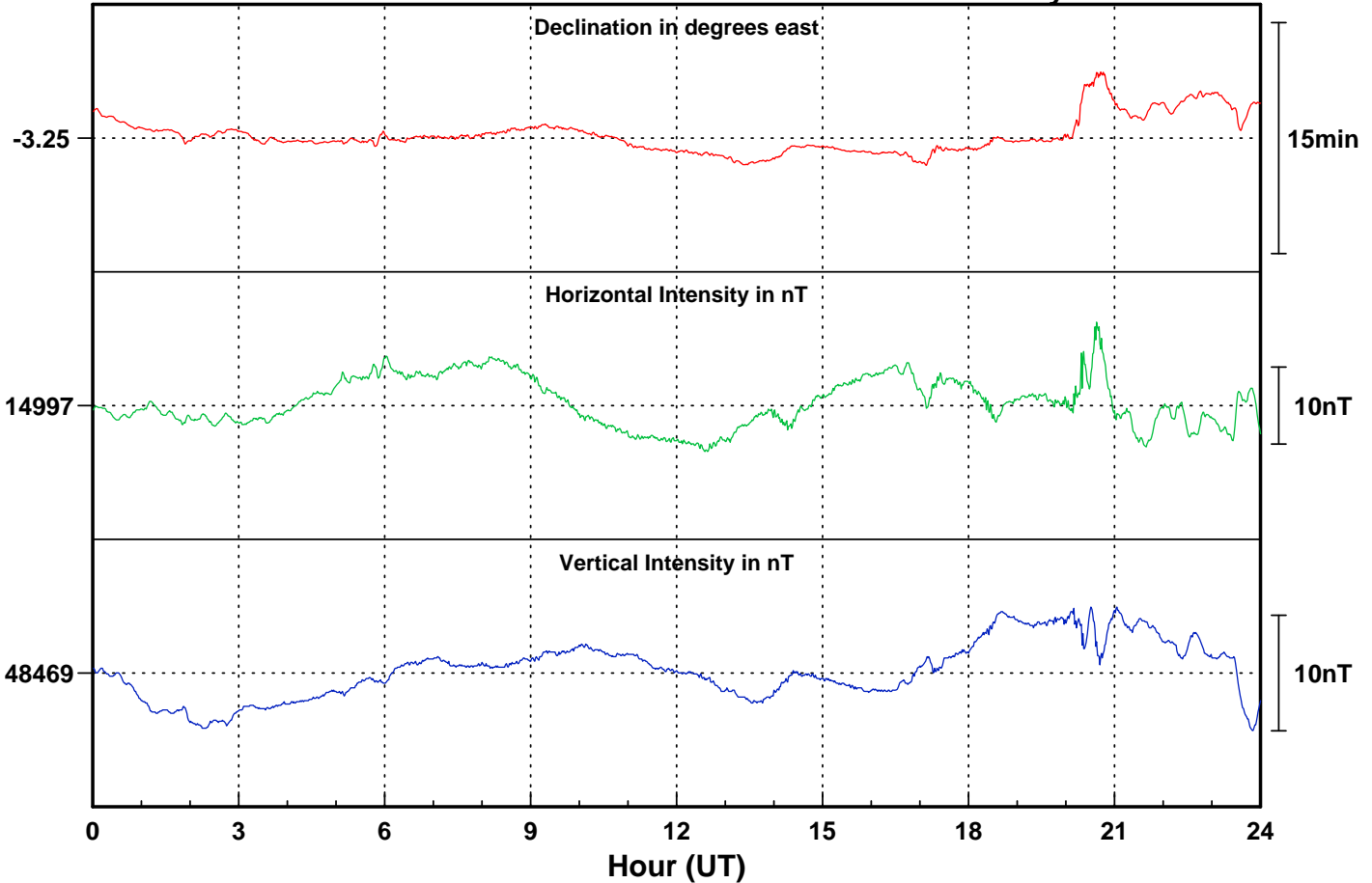
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Day number: 352



Date: 18-12-2008

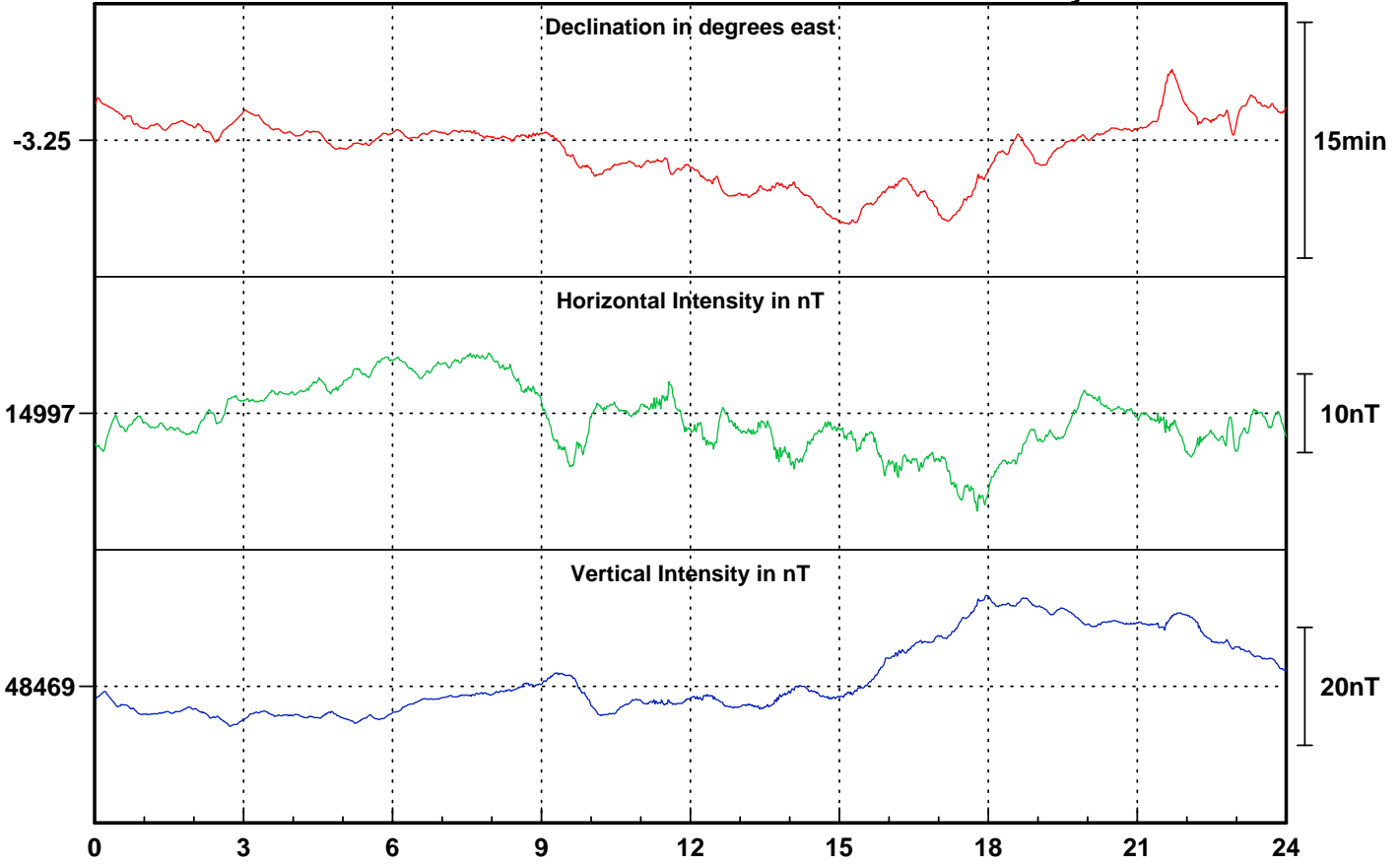
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Date: 19-12-2008

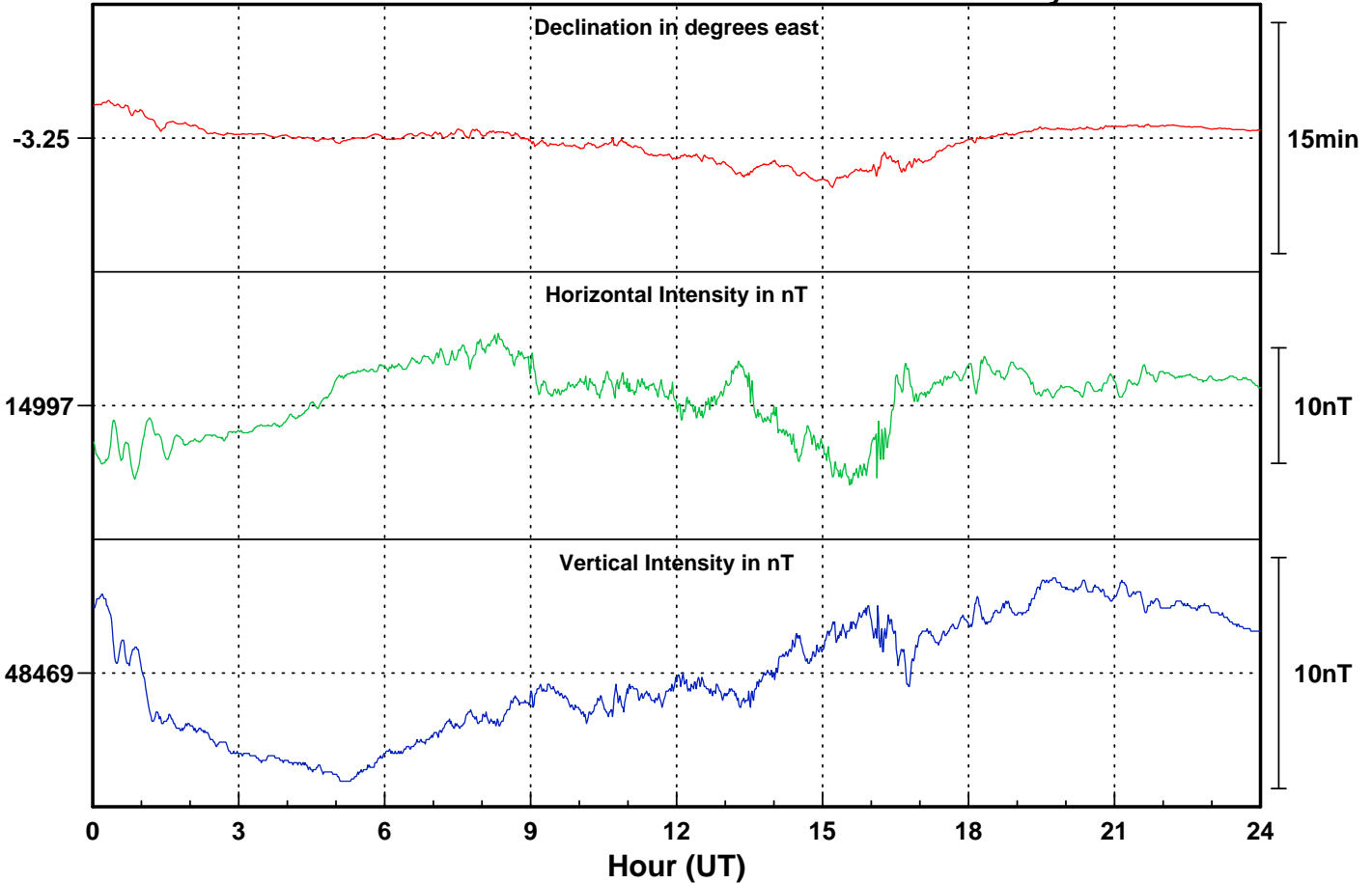
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Day number: 354



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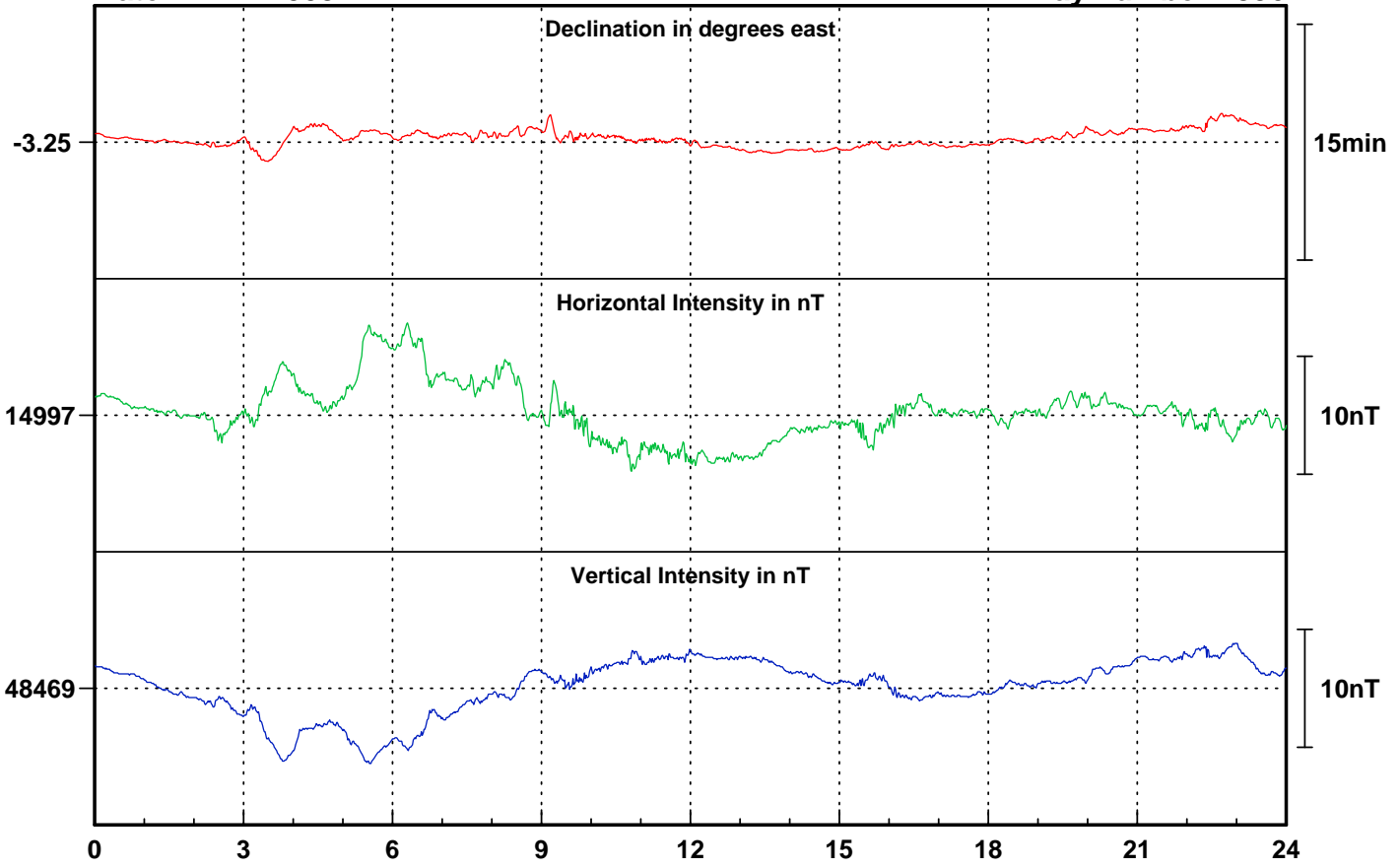
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Date: 21-12-2008

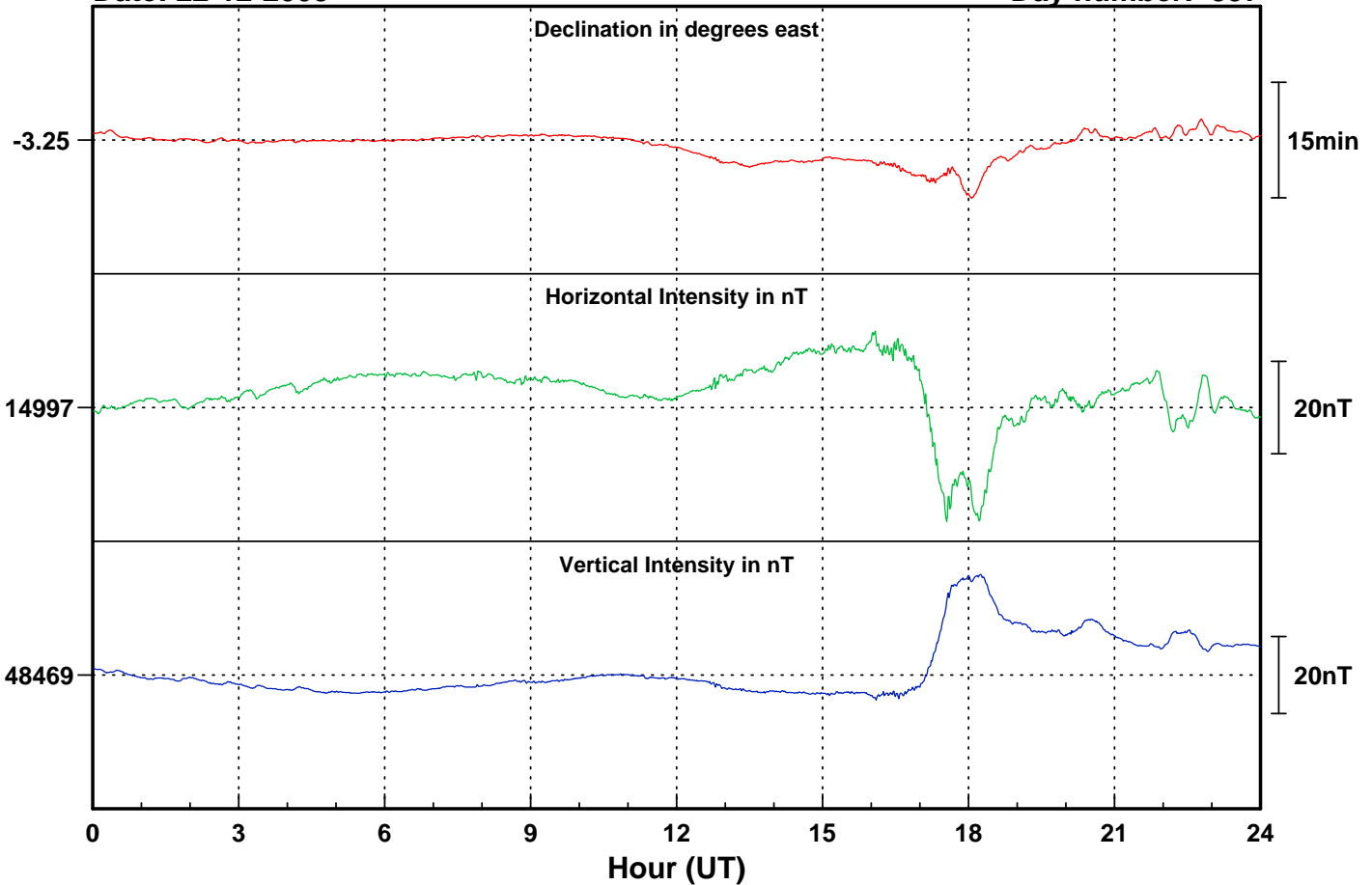
Lerwick

Day number: 356



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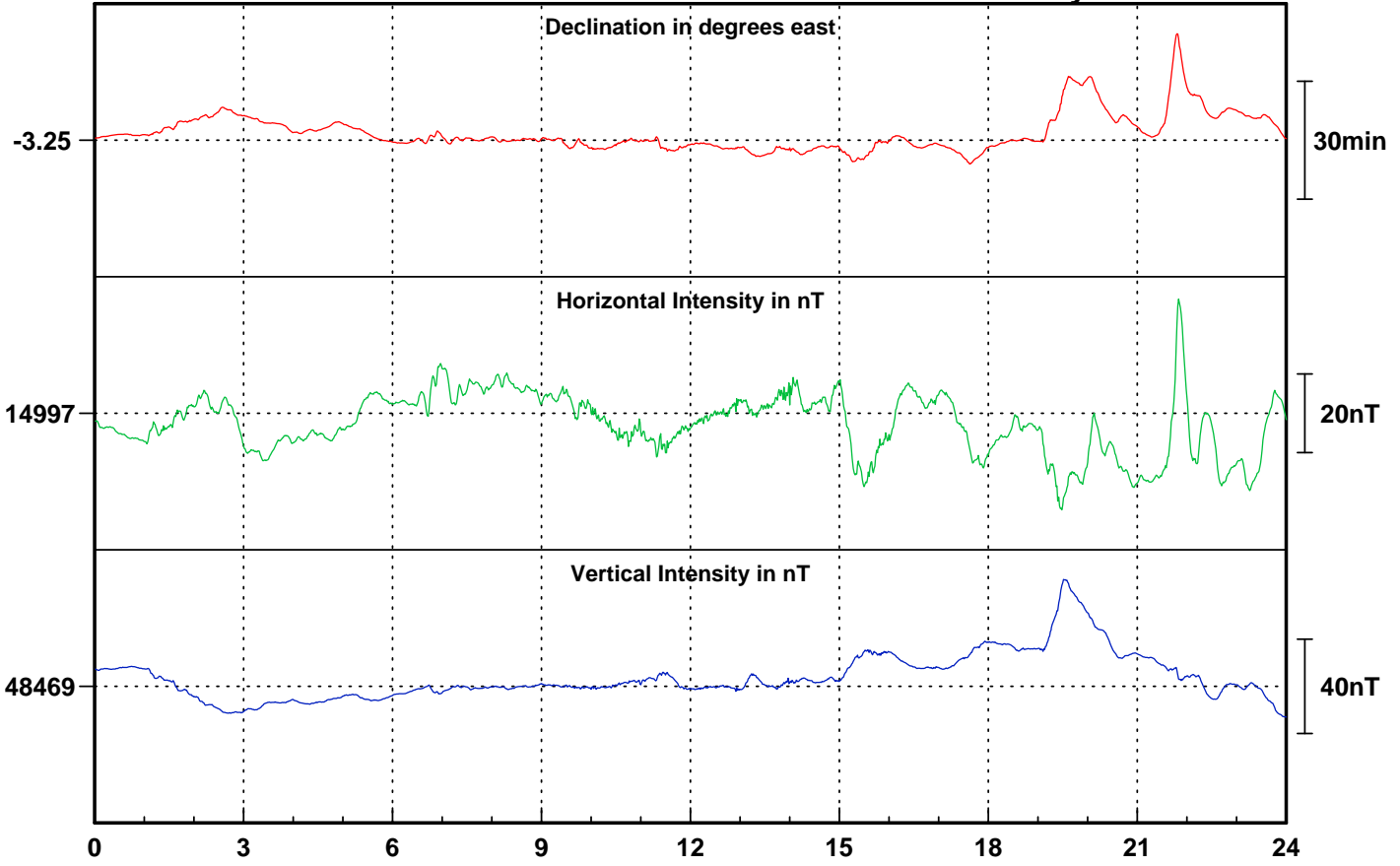
Day number: 357



Date: 23-12-2008

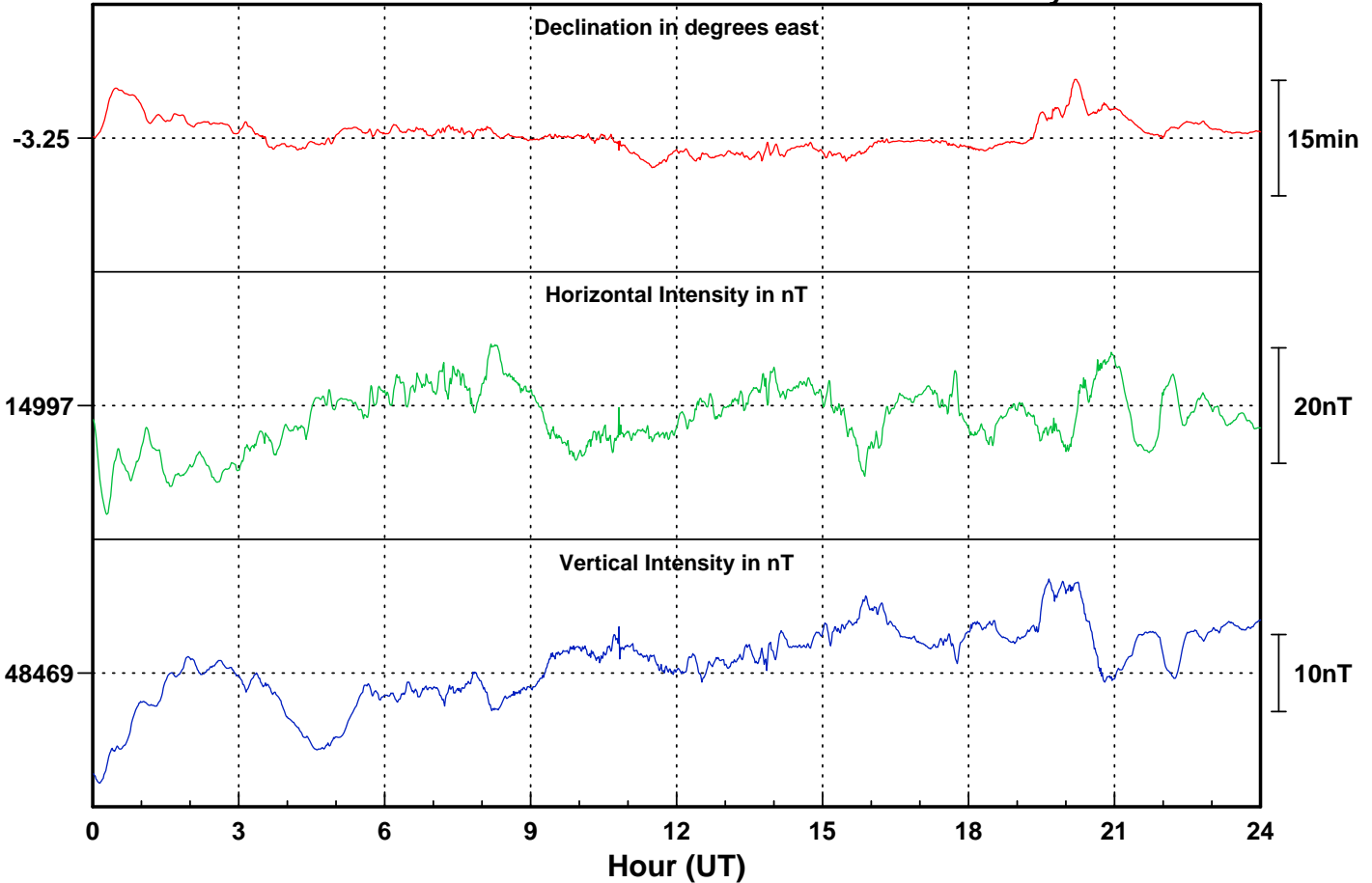
Lerwick

Day number: 358



Date: 24-12-2008

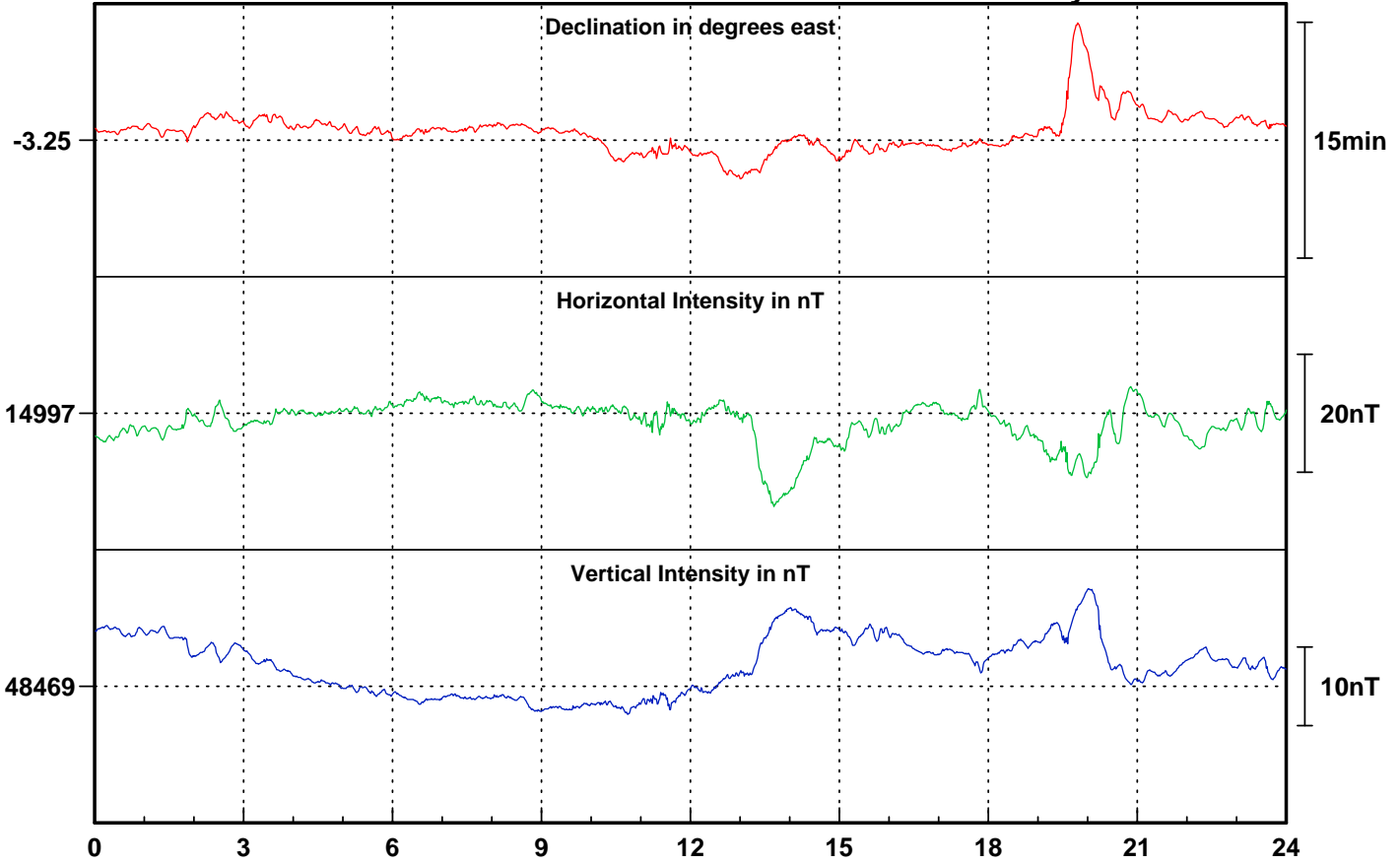
Day number: 359



Date: 25-12-2008

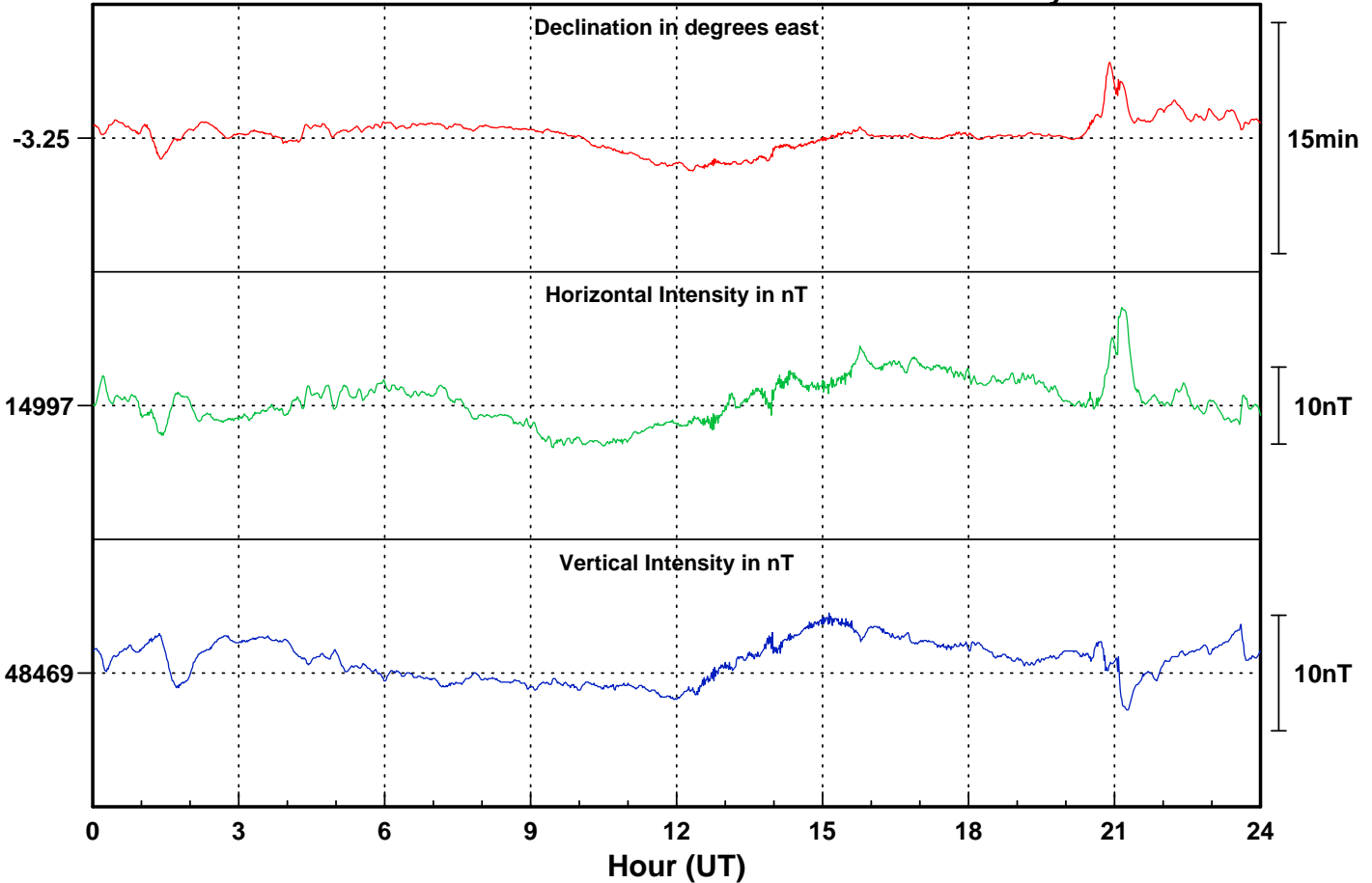
Lerwick

Day number: 360



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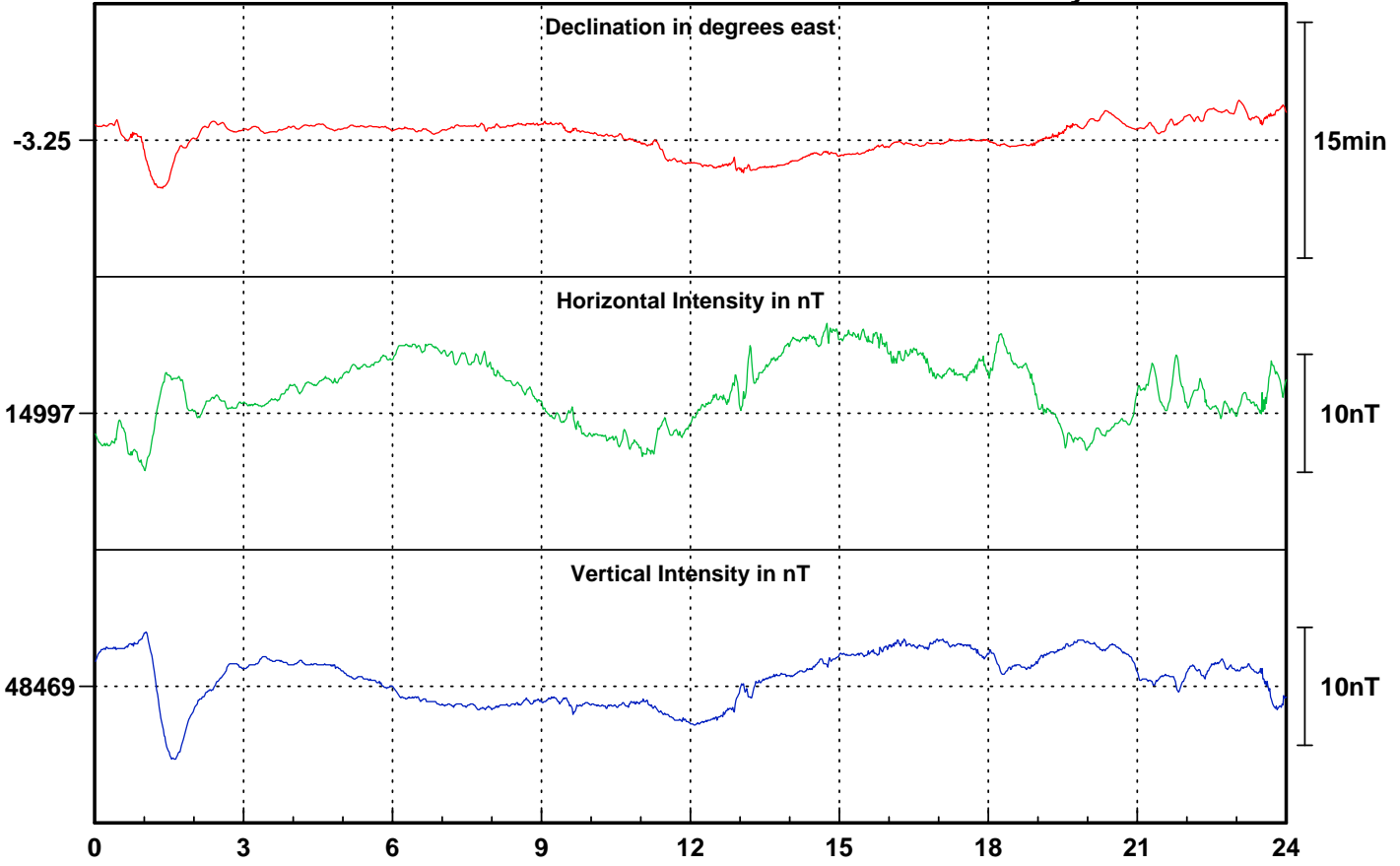
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Date: 27-12-2008

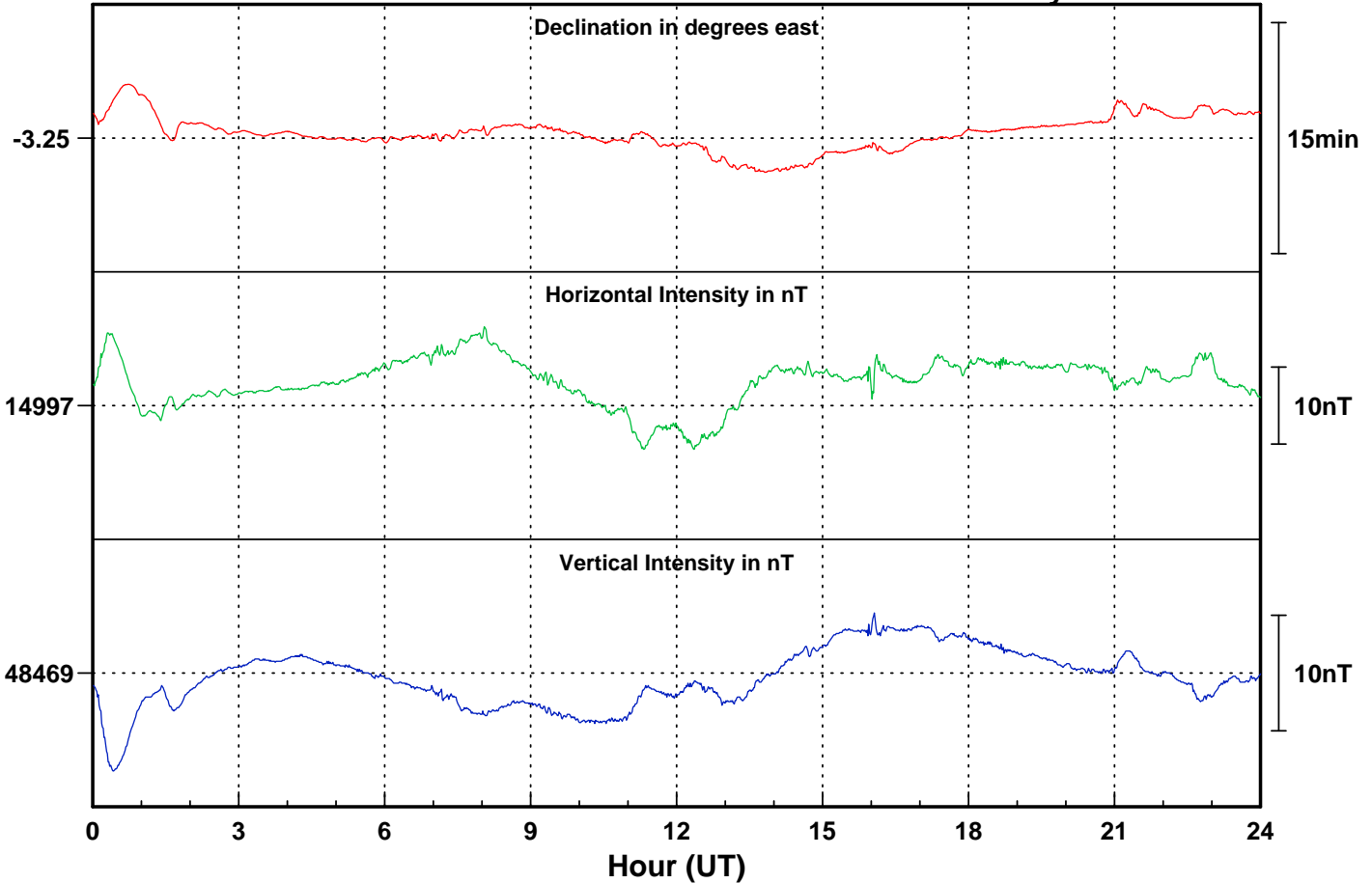
Lerwick

Day number: 362



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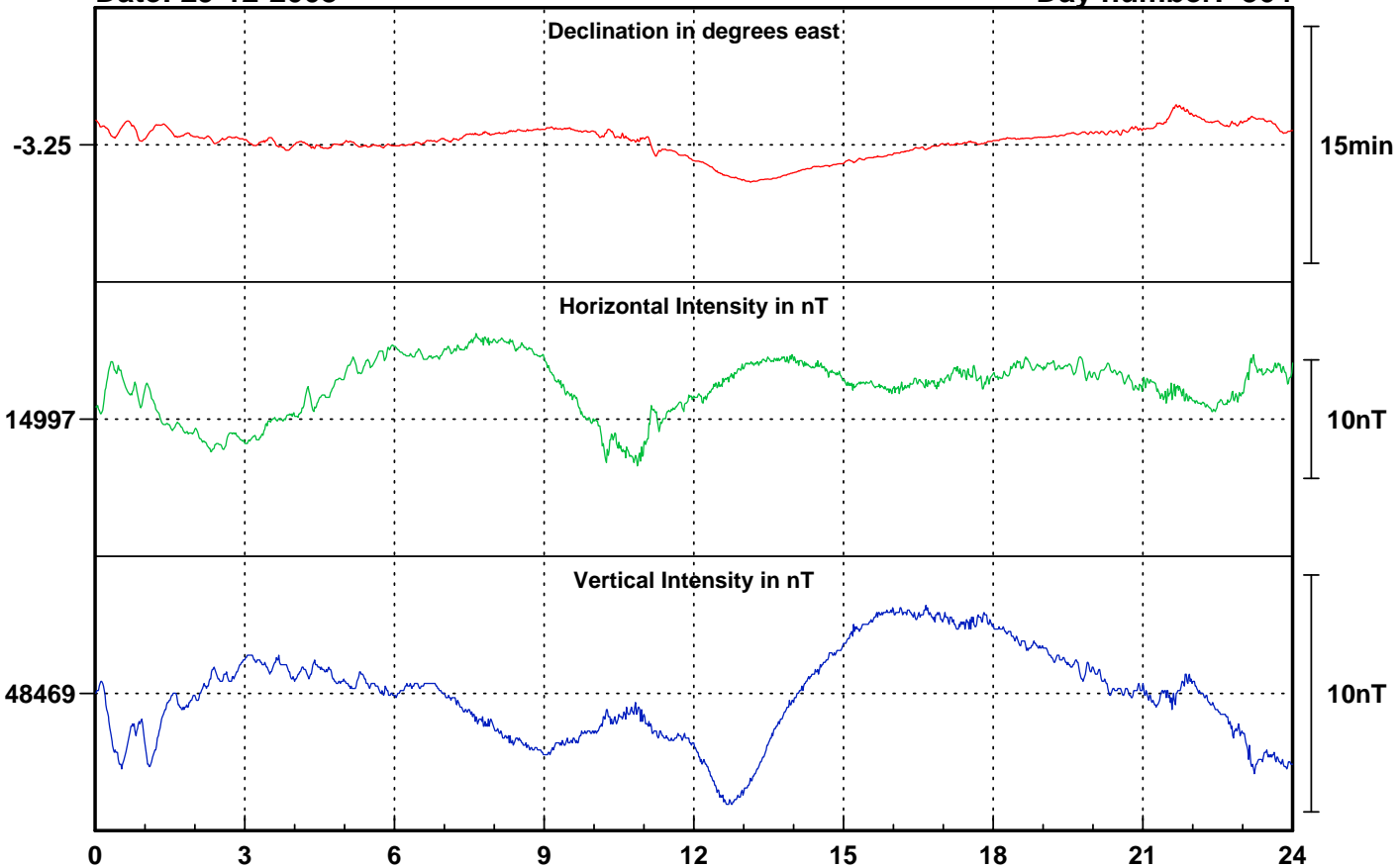
Day number: 363



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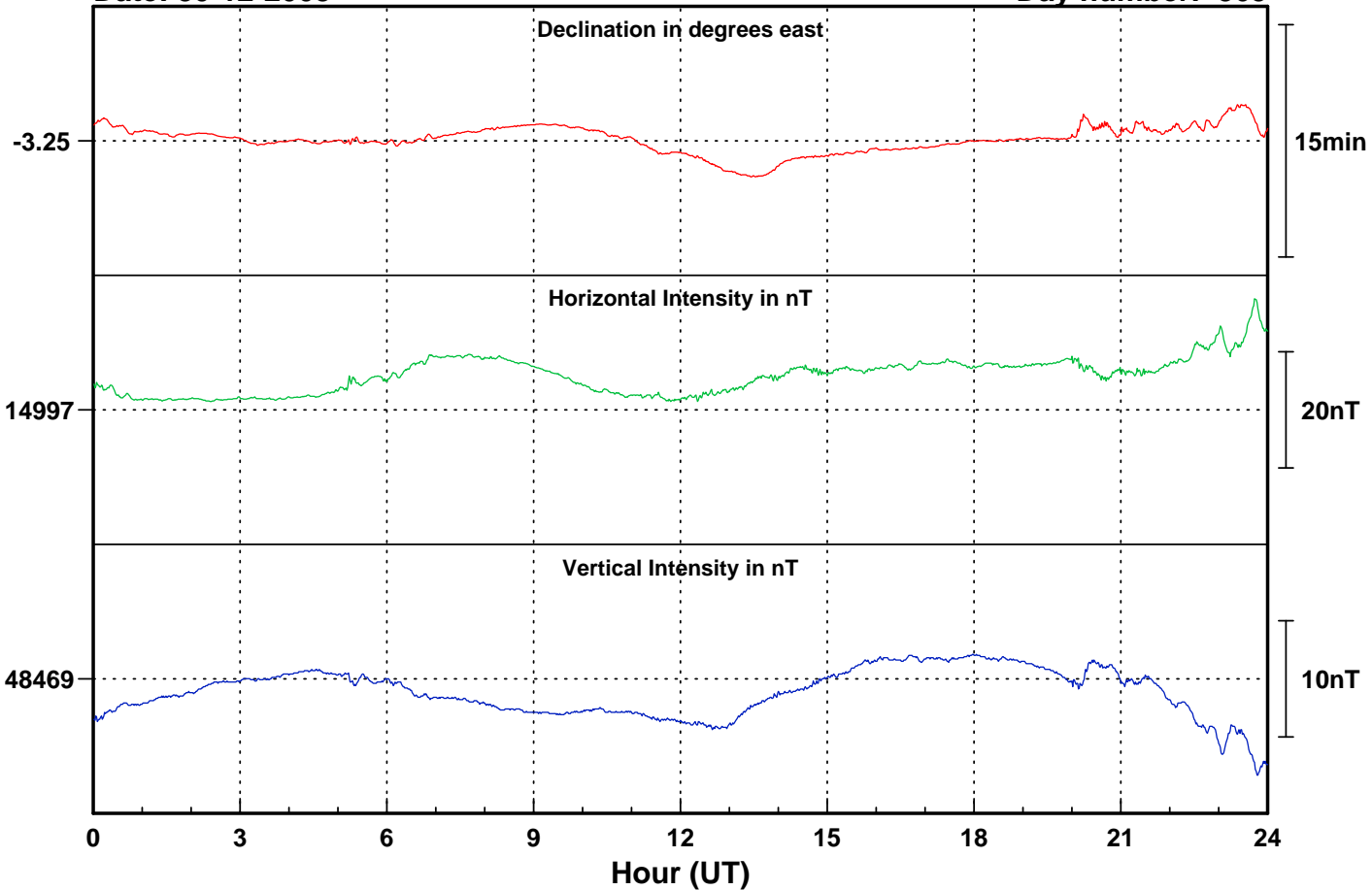
Lerwick

Day number: 364



Date: 30-12-2008

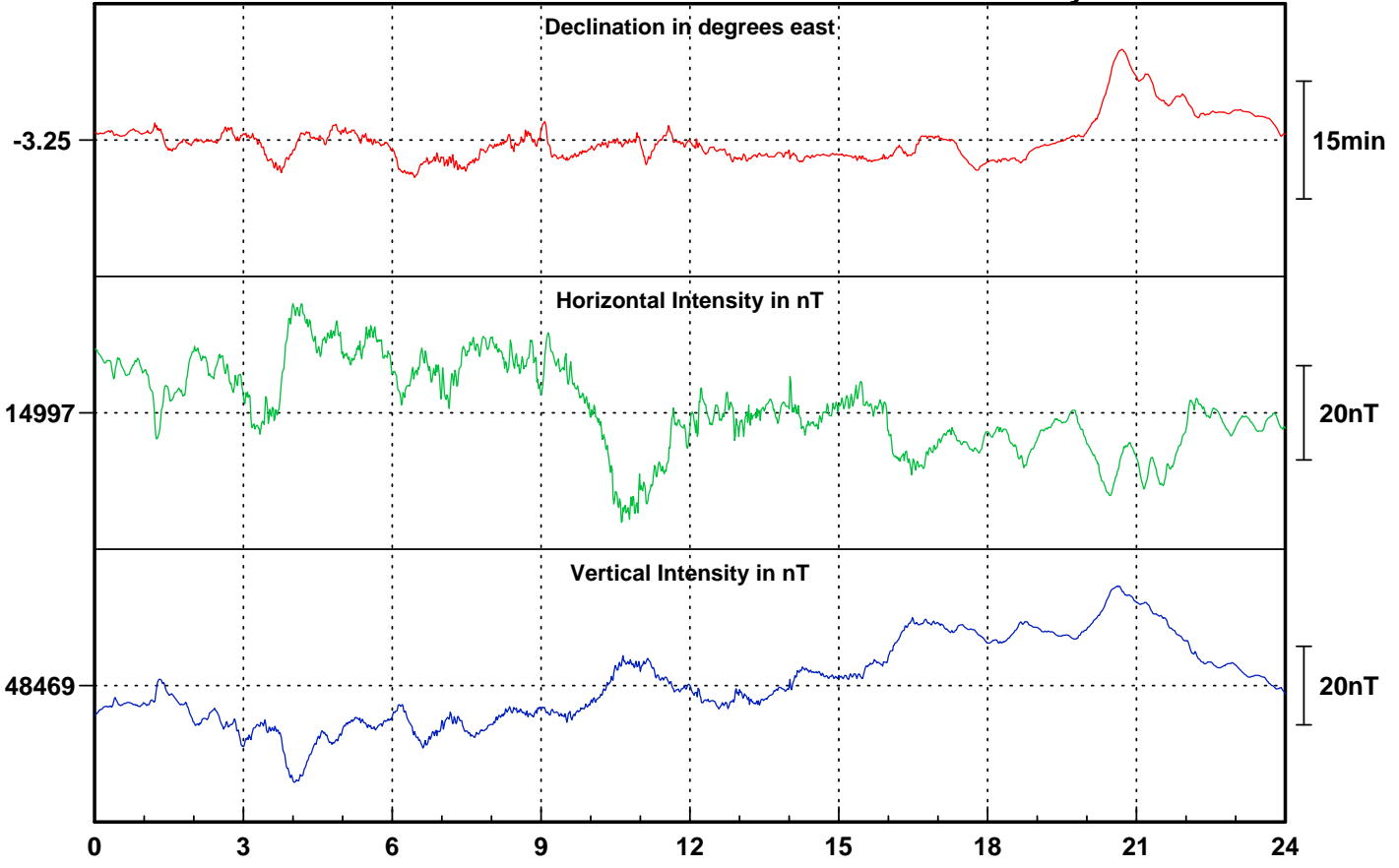
Day number: 365



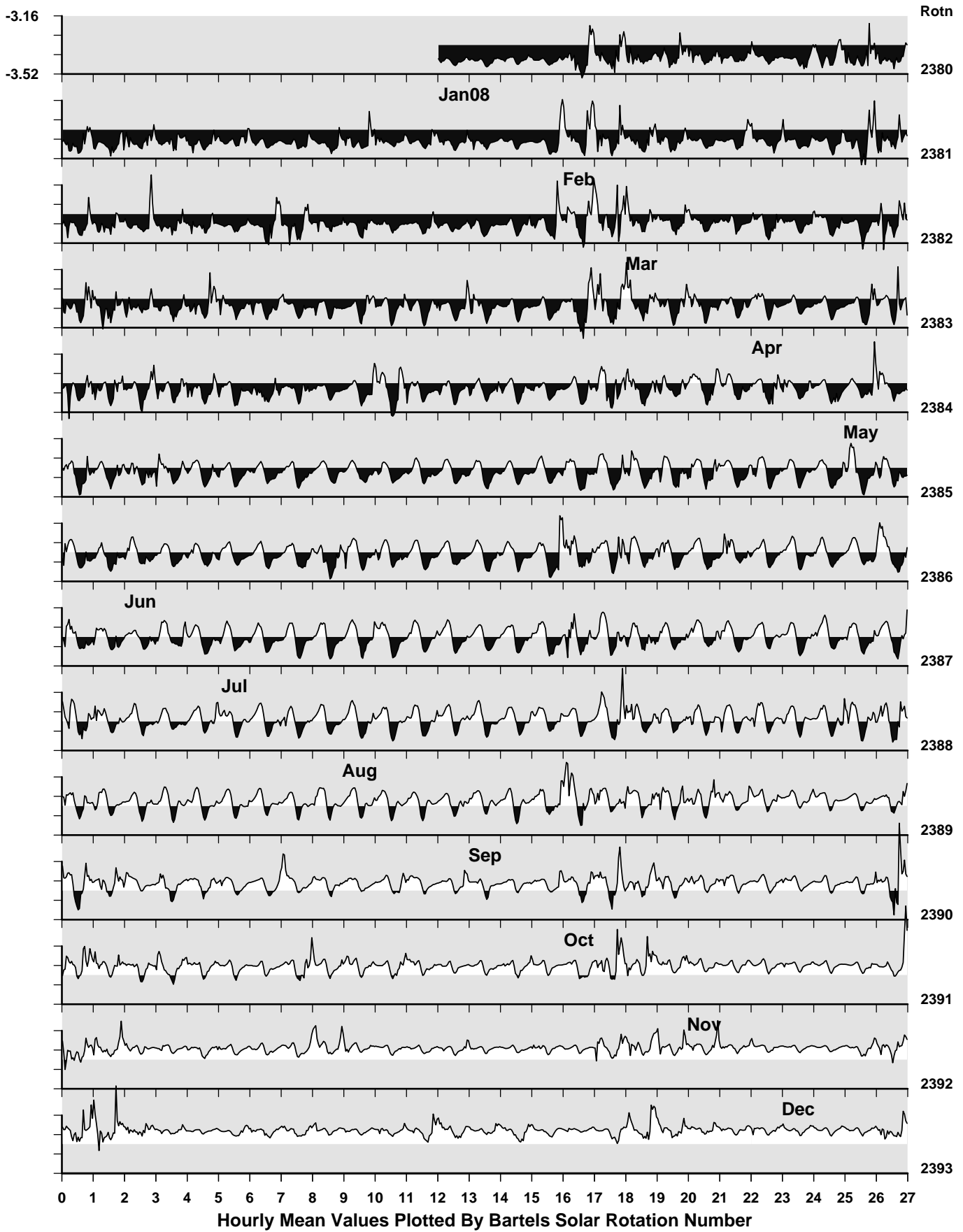
Date: 31-12-2008

Lerwick

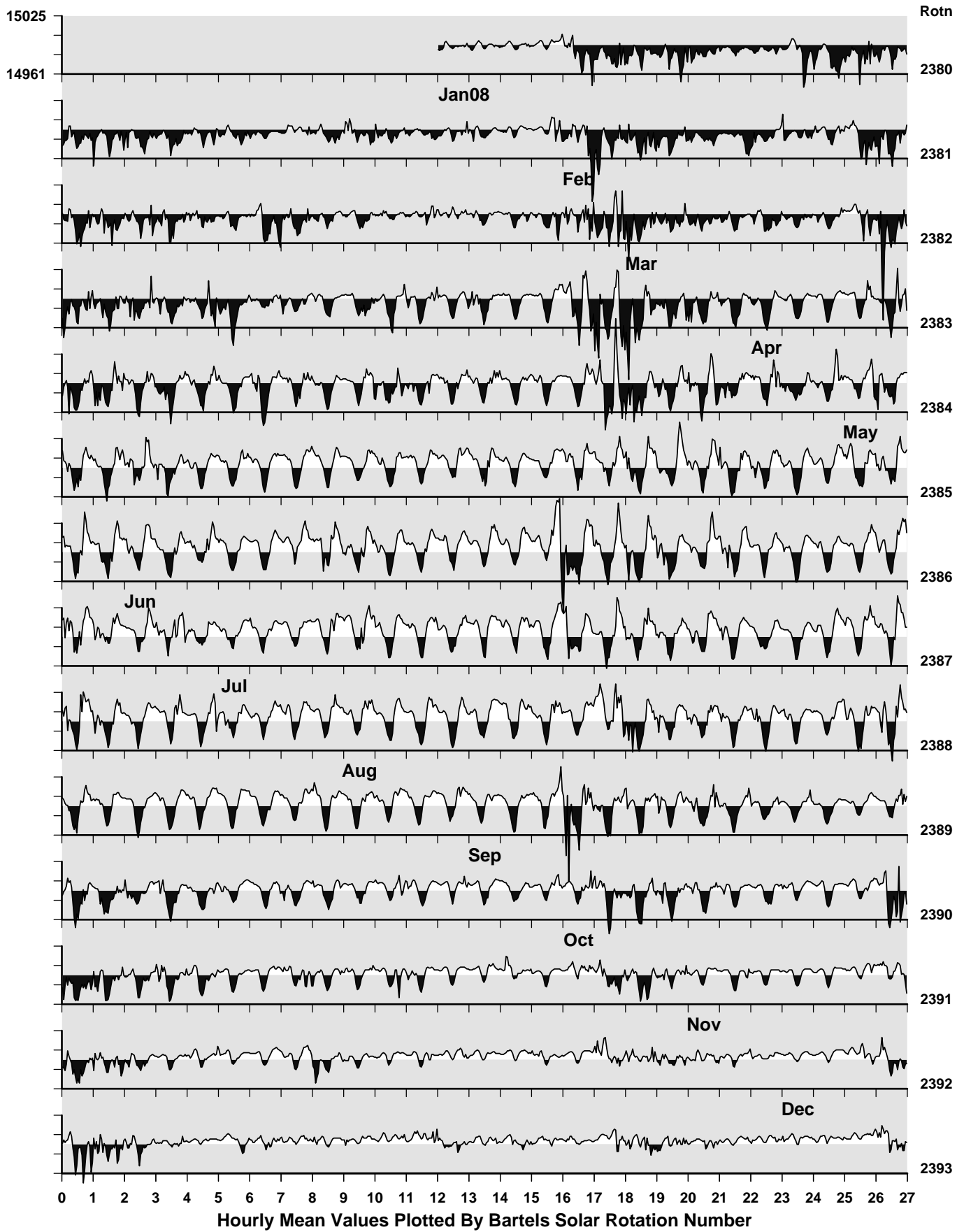
Day number: 366



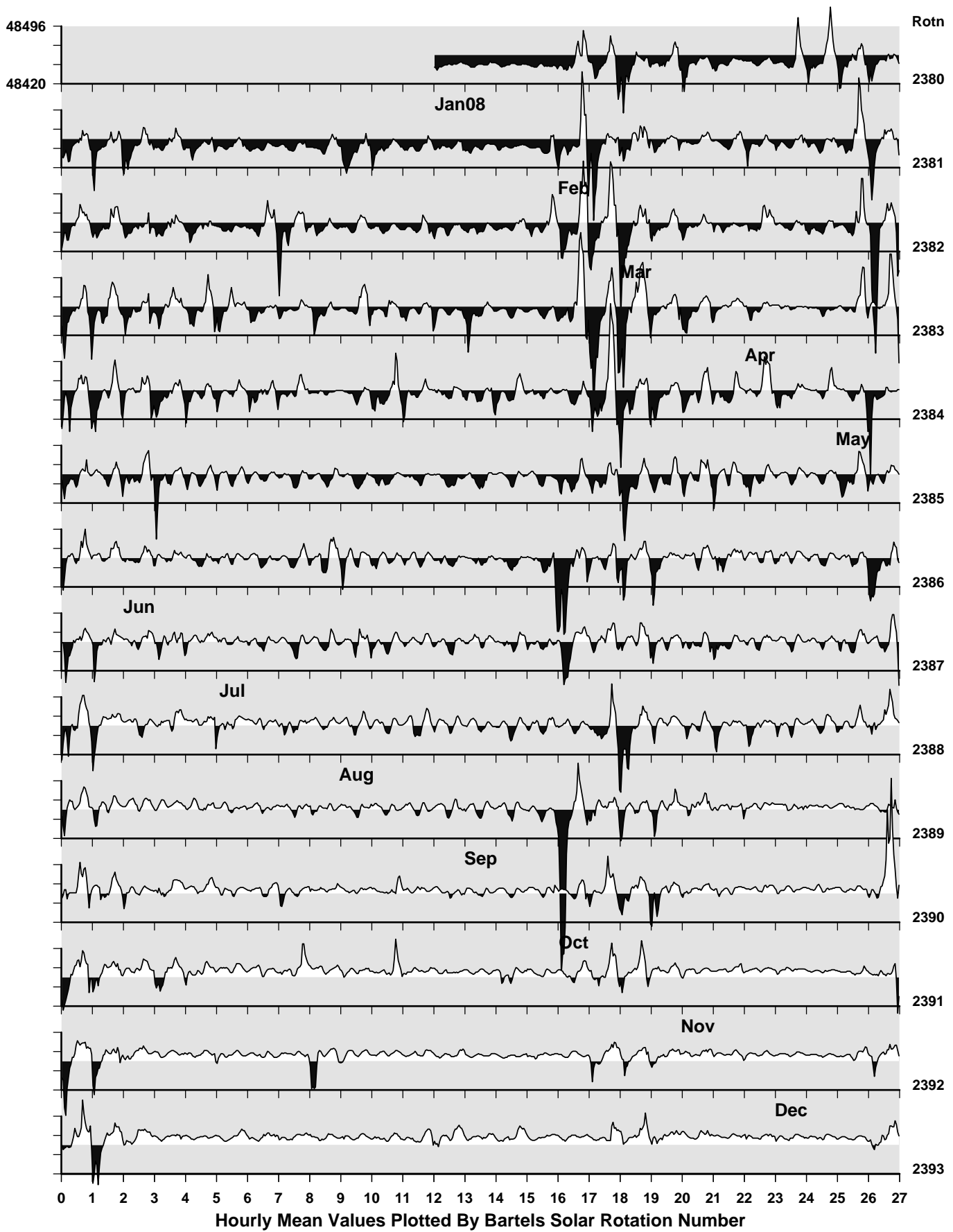
Lerwick Observatory: Declination (degrees)



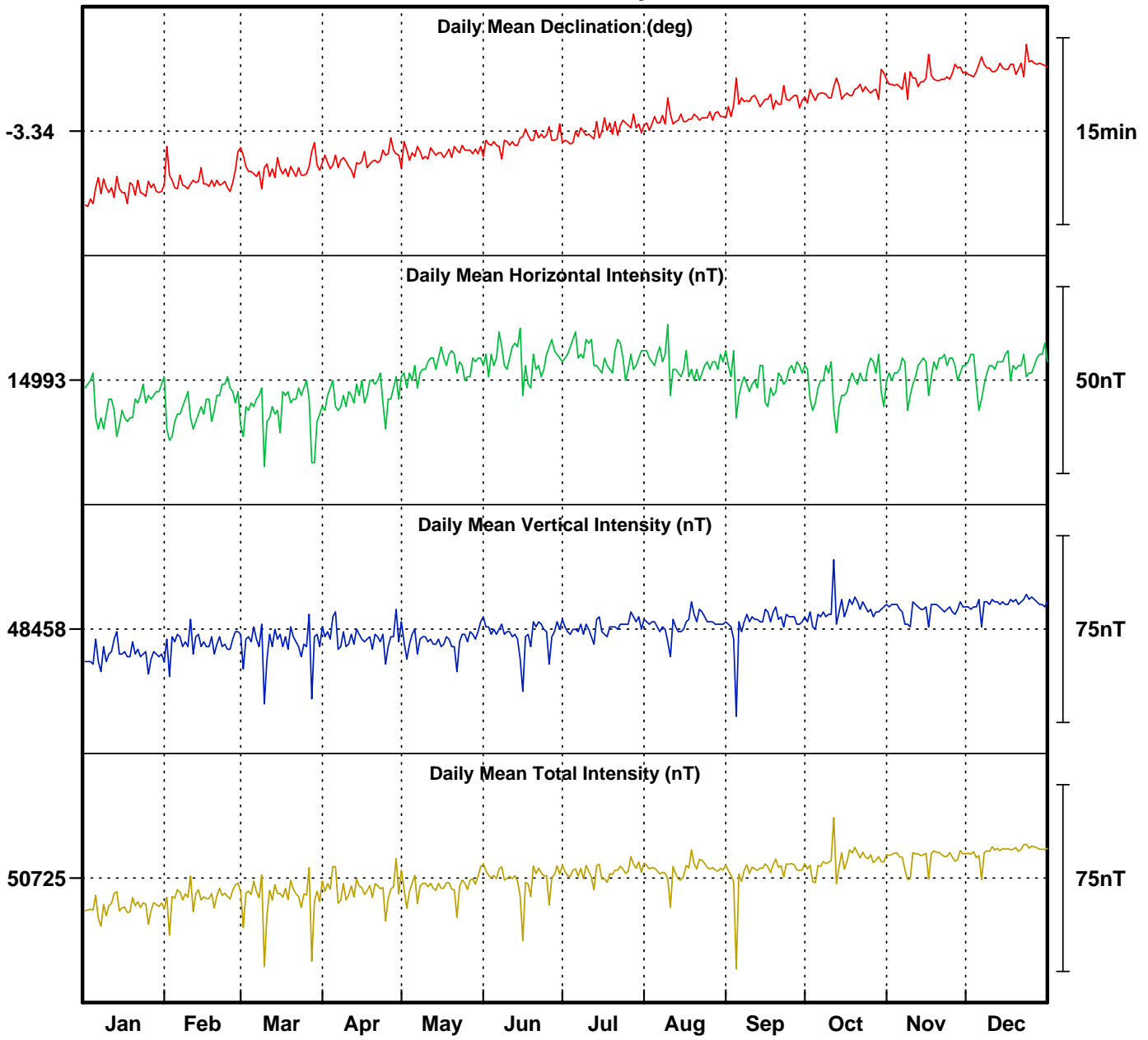
Lerwick Observatory: Horizontal Intensity (nT)



Lerwick Observatory: Vertical Intensity (nT)



Lerwick Observatory 2008



Monthly Mean Values for Lerwick Observatory 2008

Month	<i>D</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>F</i>
January	-3° 25.1′	14987 nT	72° 48.7′	14960 nT	-894 nT	48448 nT	50713 nT
February	-3° 24.2′	14986 nT	72° 48.8′	14959 nT	-890 nT	48453 nT	50717 nT
March	-3° 23.4′	14985 nT	72° 48.9′	14959 nT	-886 nT	48452 nT	50717 nT
April	-3° 22.7′	14989 nT	72° 48.6′	14963 nT	-883 nT	48455 nT	50720 nT
May	-3° 22.1′	14997 nT	72° 48.1′	14971 nT	-881 nT	48454 nT	50721 nT
June	-3° 21.0′	14999 nT	72° 48.1′	14973 nT	-877 nT	48456 nT	50724 nT
July	-3° 20.3′	14999 nT	72° 48.1′	14974 nT	-873 nT	48459 nT	50727 nT
August	-3° 19.3′	14997 nT	72° 48.2′	14972 nT	-869 nT	48460 nT	50728 nT
September	-3° 17.9′	14993 nT	72° 48.5′	14968 nT	-862 nT	48461 nT	50727 nT
October	-3° 17.1′	14992 nT	72° 48.7′	14967 nT	-859 nT	48466 nT	50732 nT
November	-3° 16.1′	14996 nT	72° 48.4′	14971 nT	-855 nT	48466 nT	50733 nT
December	-3° 15.2′	14997 nT	72° 48.4′	14973 nT	-851 nT	48469 nT	50736 nT

Note

i. The values shown here are provisional.

LERWICK RAPID VARIATIONS

SI and SSCs

Date	Time (UT)		Type	Quality	H (nT)	D (min)	Z (nT)
16-12-08	11	59	SSC*	A	-9.9	-1.15	4.7
24-12-08	10	46	SI*	B	5.1/-4.7	-1.14/1.18	-4.2

Notes:

An asterisk (*) indicates that the principal impulse was preceded by a smaller reversed impulse.

The quality of the event is classified as follows:

A = very distinct

B = fair, ordinary, but unmistakable

C = doubtful

The amplitudes given are for the first chief movement of the event.

SFEs

Date	Universal Time			H (nT)	D (min)	Z (nT)
	Start	Maximum	End			
NONE						

Note:

The amplitudes given are for the first chief movement of the event.

INDICES OF GEOMAGNETIC ACTIVITY

Lerwick Observatory

December 2008

Day	K - INDICES FOR THREE-HOUR INTERVAL								SUM
	00-03	03-06	06-09	09-12	12-15	15-18	18-21	21-24	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4
4	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	13
5	1	1	1	2	1	4	2	3	15
6	2	3	2	1	1	4	3	2	18
7	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	10
8	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
11	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	5
12	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
16	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	8
17	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	5
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
19	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	6
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
22	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	5
23	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	15
24	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	10
25	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
26	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	4
27	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
28	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
31	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	16

Lower bound (nT) for the range for each index value at Lerwick Observatory									
K-Index									
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	10	20	40	80	140	240	400	660	1000

The aa Index

Date	Day	K-North	K-South	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
01-12-08	336	00000000	01000000	2	3	3	2	3
02-12-08	337	00000000	00100000	2	3	3	2	3
03-12-08	338	10002222	12222332	10	19	9	20	15
04-12-08	339	23222222	13233201	18	19	21	15	18
05-12-08	340	21232424	01233313	27	21	16	32	24
06-12-08	341	44222432	33232312	34	23	33	24	29
07-12-08	342	21222311	12232211	15	15	16	14	15
08-12-08	343	01000120	21000001	5	6	6	5	6
09-12-08	344	00000000	00000001	2	3	2	3	3
10-12-08	345	00001121	00112112	6	9	4	11	7
11-12-08	346	11111211	21112211	9	11	9	11	10
12-12-08	347	10011011	01112111	6	8	6	8	7
13-12-08	348	21001000	11111011	5	7	8	5	6
14-12-08	349	10000000	00000000	3	2	3	2	3
15-12-08	350	11101112	01210011	8	7	8	7	8
16-12-08	351	01112133	12112222	14	13	8	19	14
17-12-08	352	22102211	23313311	11	21	16	16	16
18-12-08	353	00000121	01002101	5	6	3	9	6
19-12-08	354	11011112	01022101	8	8	7	9	8
20-12-08	355	00001100	10111100	4	6	4	5	5
21-12-08	356	01010000	00110011	4	5	5	4	4
22-12-08	357	00001432	00101322	15	11	3	23	13
23-12-08	358	32222344	12222322	30	17	17	31	24
24-12-08	359	32221221	11221211	16	11	16	11	13
25-12-08	360	00012121	11022111	8	9	6	11	9
26-12-08	361	10000011	11001100	4	5	4	5	5
27-12-08	362	20000011	00101101	5	5	5	6	5
28-12-08	363	10000100	00121100	4	6	6	4	5
29-12-08	364	10010001	00000000 Est	4	2 Est	4 Est	3 Est	3 Est
30-12-08	365	00000001	00000001 Est	3	3 Est	2 Est	4 Est	3 Est
31-12-08	366	33332243	03321212 Est	31	17 Est	26 Est	21 Est	24 Est
Monthly mean value =			10.1 Est					

- (a) The northern daily mean value, Aa_n
- (b) The southern daily mean value, Aa_s
- (c) The mean value of aa for the interval 00-12 UT
- (d) The mean value of aa for the interval 12-24 UT
- (e) The daily mean value of aa (Aa)

Notes

- i. The values are rounded to the nearest integer.
- ii. The units of the aa index are nT.
- iii. The values shown here are provisional. The definitive values are computed and published by the International Service for Geomagnetic Indices, Paris.
- iv. Est. indicates values that are not definitive.