



British
Geological
Survey



MONTHLY MAGNETIC BULLETIN

Lerwick Observatory

December 2023



Lerwick Observatory magnetic data

1. Introduction

Lerwick Observatory is one of three geomagnetic observatories in the UK operated and maintained by the British Geological Survey (BGS).

This bulletin is published to provide rapid access to the provisional geomagnetic observatory results. The information is freely available for personal, academic, educational and non-commercial research or use. Magnetic observatory data are presented as a series of plots of one-minute, hourly and daily values, followed by tabulations of monthly values, reports of rapid variations and geomagnetic activity indices. 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:

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Internet: geomag.bgs.ac.uk

2. Position

The observatory 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° 08'16.8"N 358° 49'01.2"E
Geomagnetic: 61° 48'36.0"N 088° 02'31.2"E
Height above mean sea level: 85 m

The geographical coordinates are measured by a handheld GPS device, which uses WGS84 as the reference coordinate system. The height above MSL is determined from the best available contour maps. The geomagnetic co-ordinates are approximations, calculated using the 13th generation International Geomagnetic Reference Field (IGRF) at epoch 2021.5. On-line access to models (including IGRF), charts and navigational data are available at geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/models_compass/home

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 data acquisition software, running on QNX operated computers, controls the data logging and the 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 and the total field intensity samples are filtered using a 7-point cosine filter. The one-minute values provide input for various data products, available on-line at geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/home

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 are also 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 to a page and show the one-minute 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 and/or coronal holes on the Sun may recur after 27 days: the same is true for geomagnetically quiet intervals. Plotting the data in this way highlights this recurrence. Diurnal variations are also clear in these plots and the amplitude changes throughout the year highlight the seasonal changes. Longer term secular variation is also illustrated.

Full lists of the UK observatory hourly mean values from 1983 to the present day are available at geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/data/obs_data/hourly_means

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. It is anticipated that these provisional values will not be altered by more than a few nT or tenths of arcminutes before being made definitive at the end of the year.

4.6 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. These X-rays cause increased ionisation in the ionosphere, which leads to absorption of short-wave radio signals. A solar flare effect (sfe), or "crochet", may be observed on a magnetogram during geomagnetically quiet times. It is a relatively short-term change (tens of minutes) to the normal diurnal variation and can vary in size (tens of nT) depending on local time (LT), geomagnetic latitude and solar zenith angle.

4.7 Local 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 maximum range in H or 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 lower bounds (in nT) for the classification of each period at Lerwick are:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	10	20	40	80	140	240	400	660	1000

The K index retains the LT and seasonal dependence of activity associated with the position of the observatory. The 3-hourly K indices for the month are tabulated and also plotted as a histogram. All UK observatory K indices are available at geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/data/magnetic_indices/k_indices

4.8 Global geomagnetic activity indices

The 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 3-hourly aa indices are tabulated along with the daily mean value of aa (denoted Aa), the mean values of aa for the intervals 00-12UT (Aa_{am}) and 12-24UT (Aa_{pm}) and the monthly mean value. The 3-hourly aa indices for the month are also plotted as a histogram.

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 bulletin are available at geomag.bgs.ac.uk/data_service/data/magnetic_indices/aaindex as well as the full data set from 1868.

Definitive aa are published by the International Service for Geomagnetic Indices, EOST, 5 rue René Descartes, 67084 Strasbourg Cedex, France.

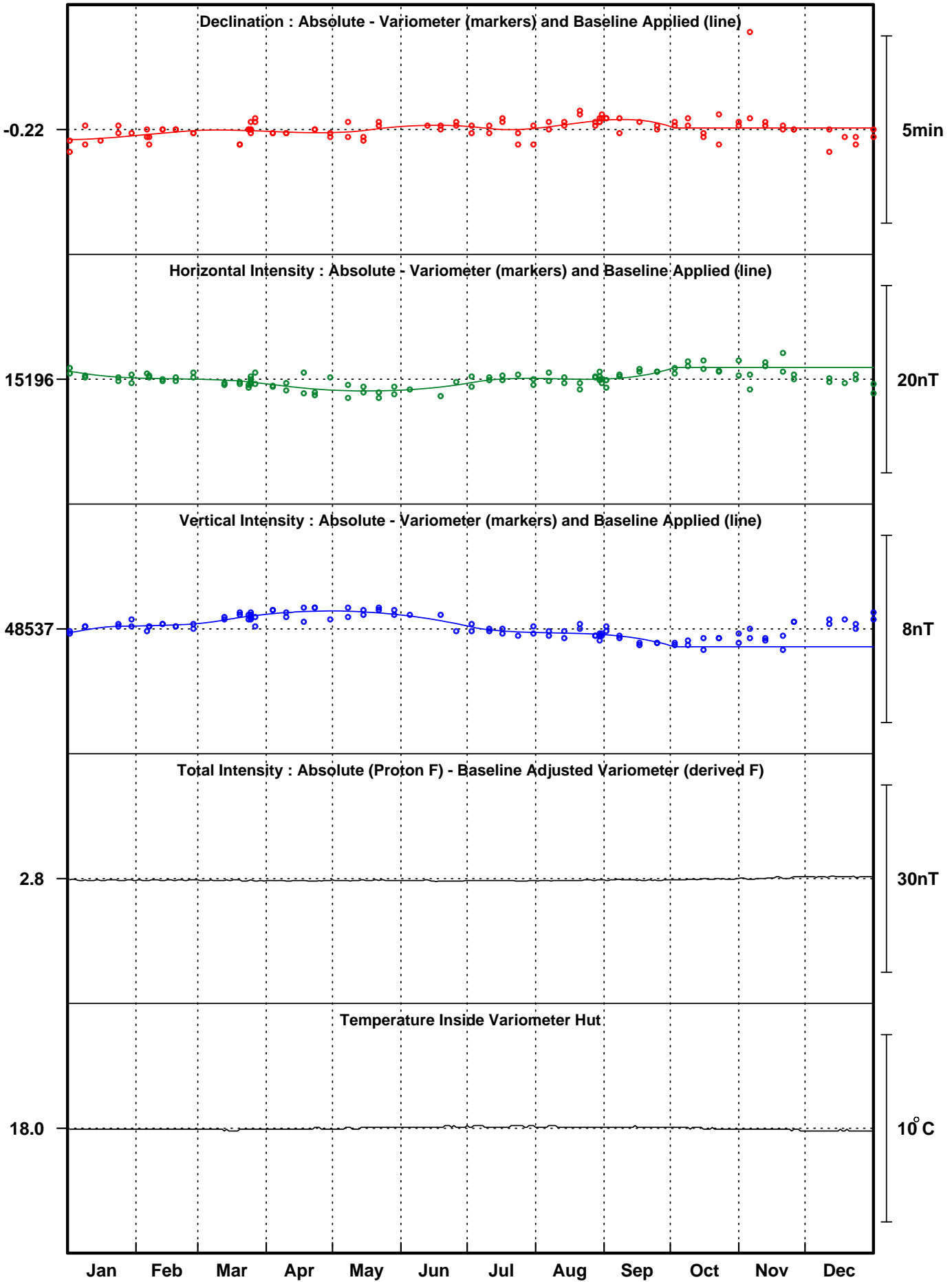
5. Conditions of use

The data presented in this bulletin are provided for personal, academic, educational, non-commercial research or other non-commercial use and are not for sale or distribution to third parties without written permission from BGS.

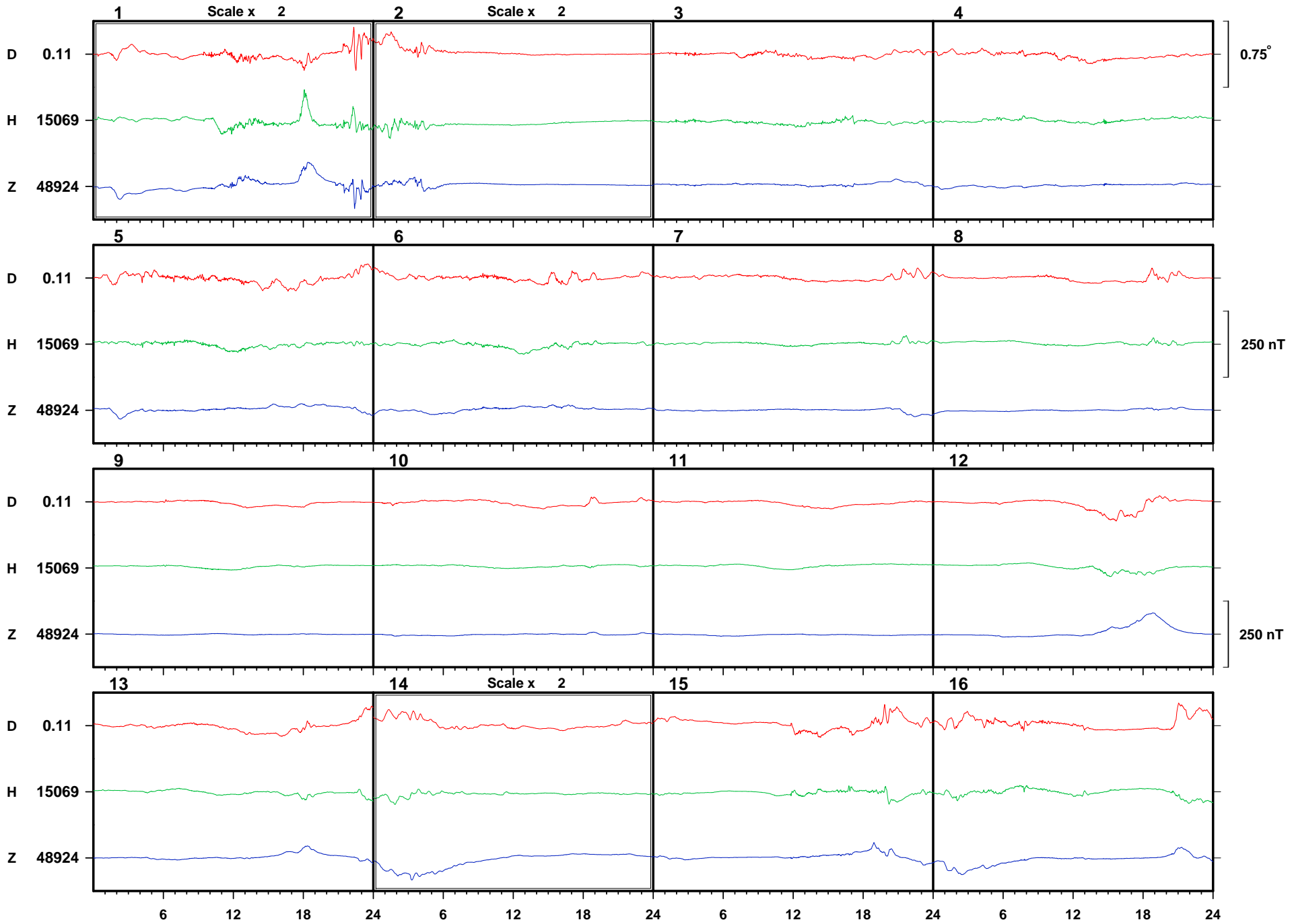
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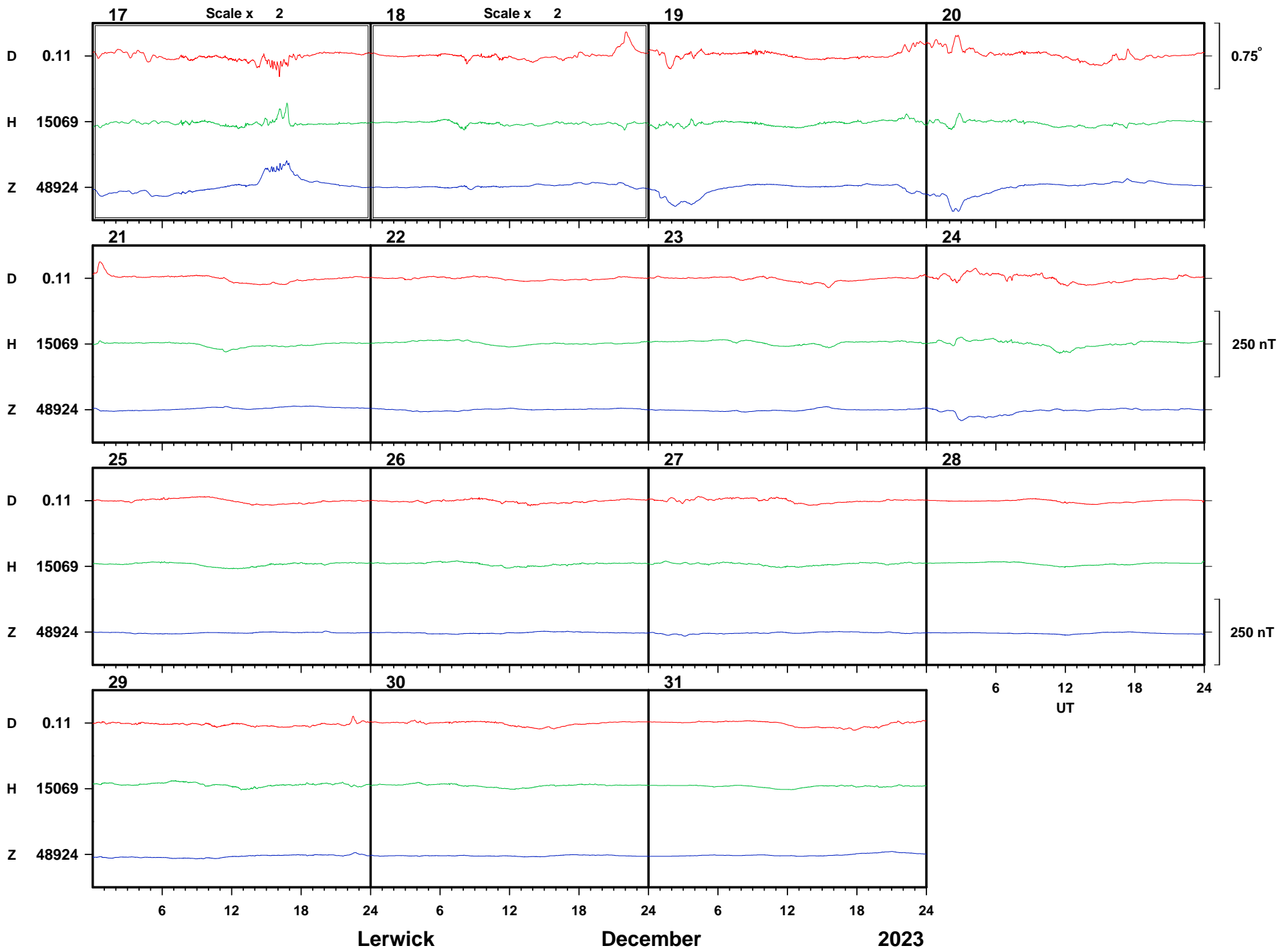
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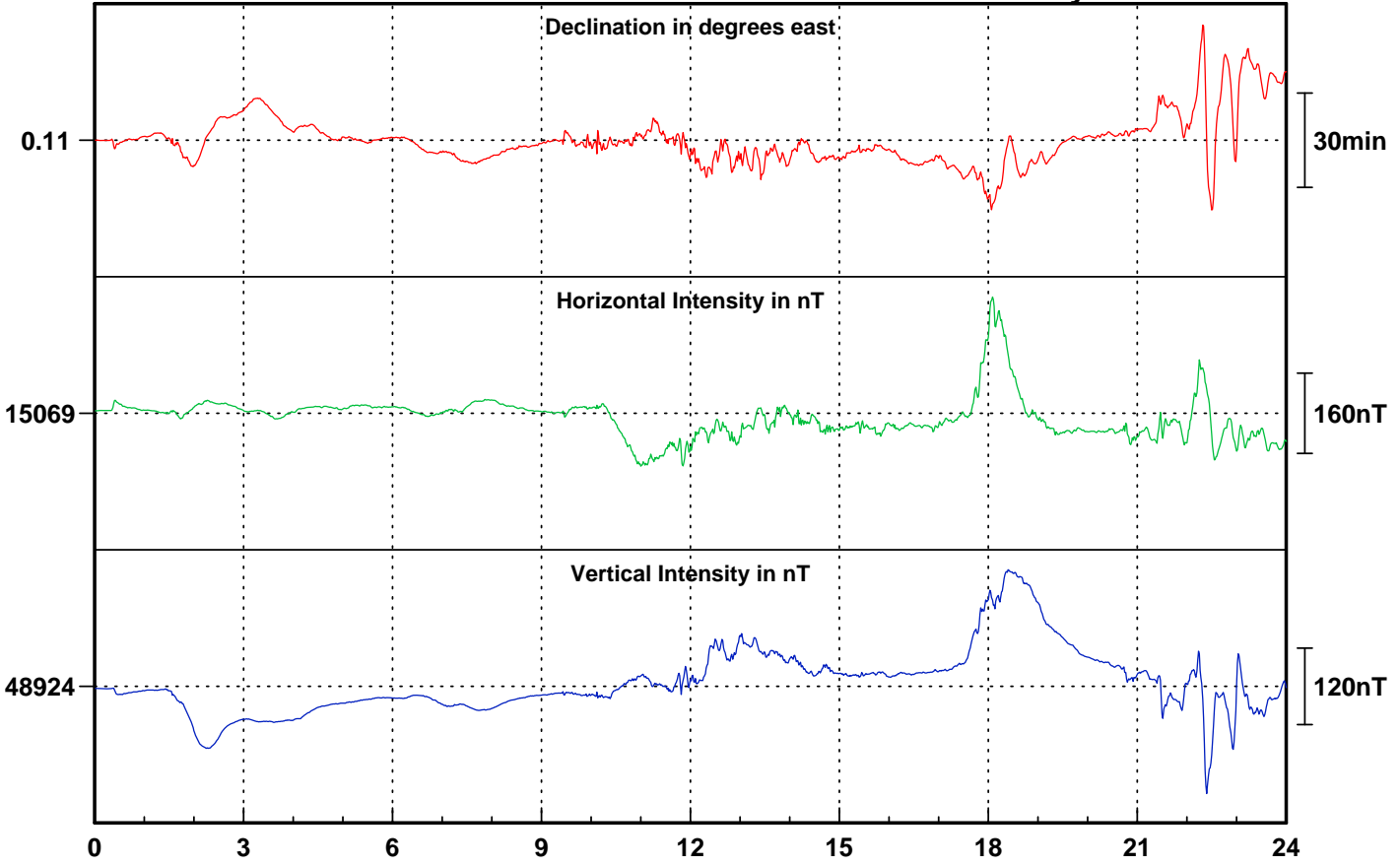




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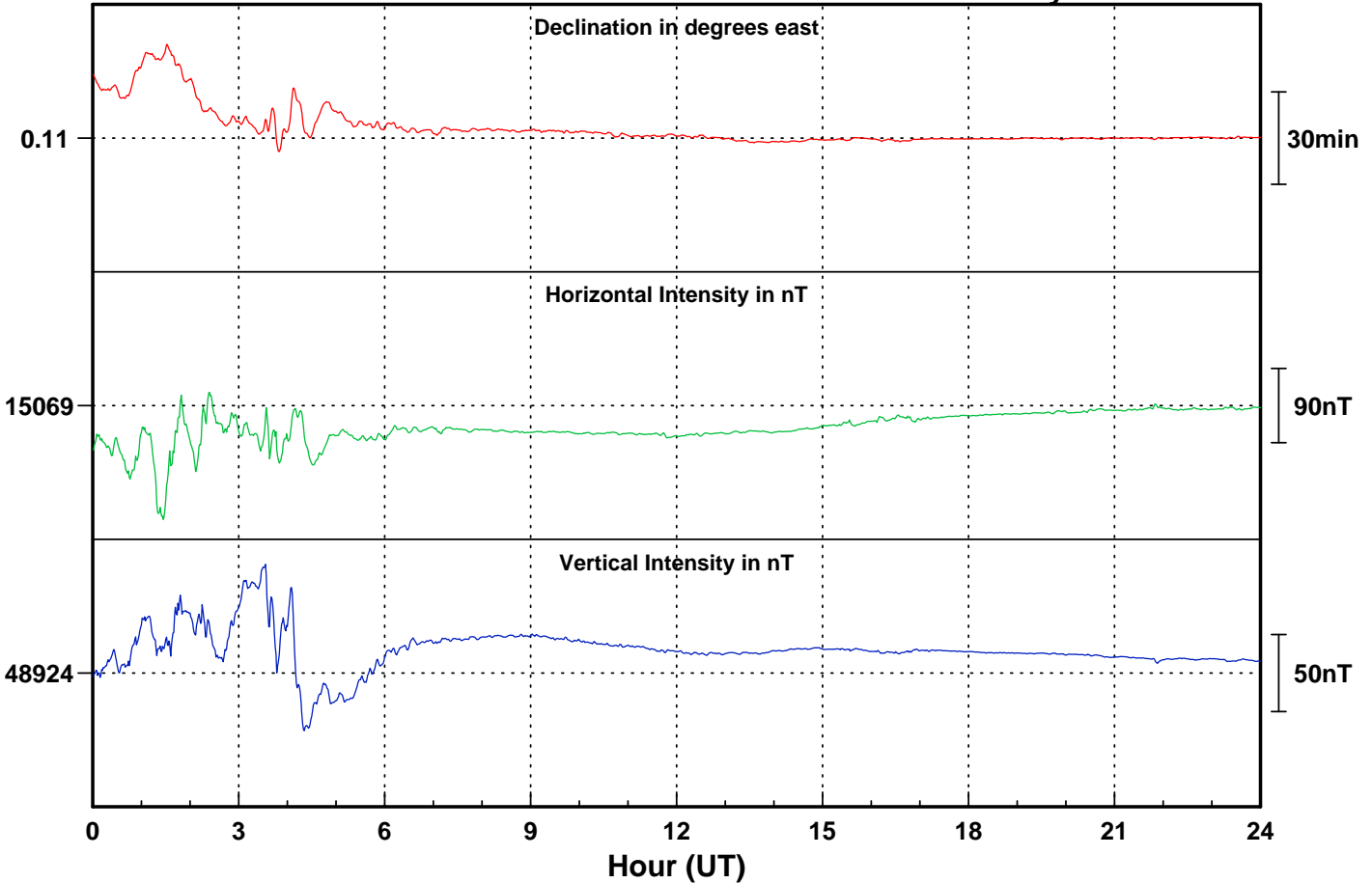
Lerwick

Day number: 335



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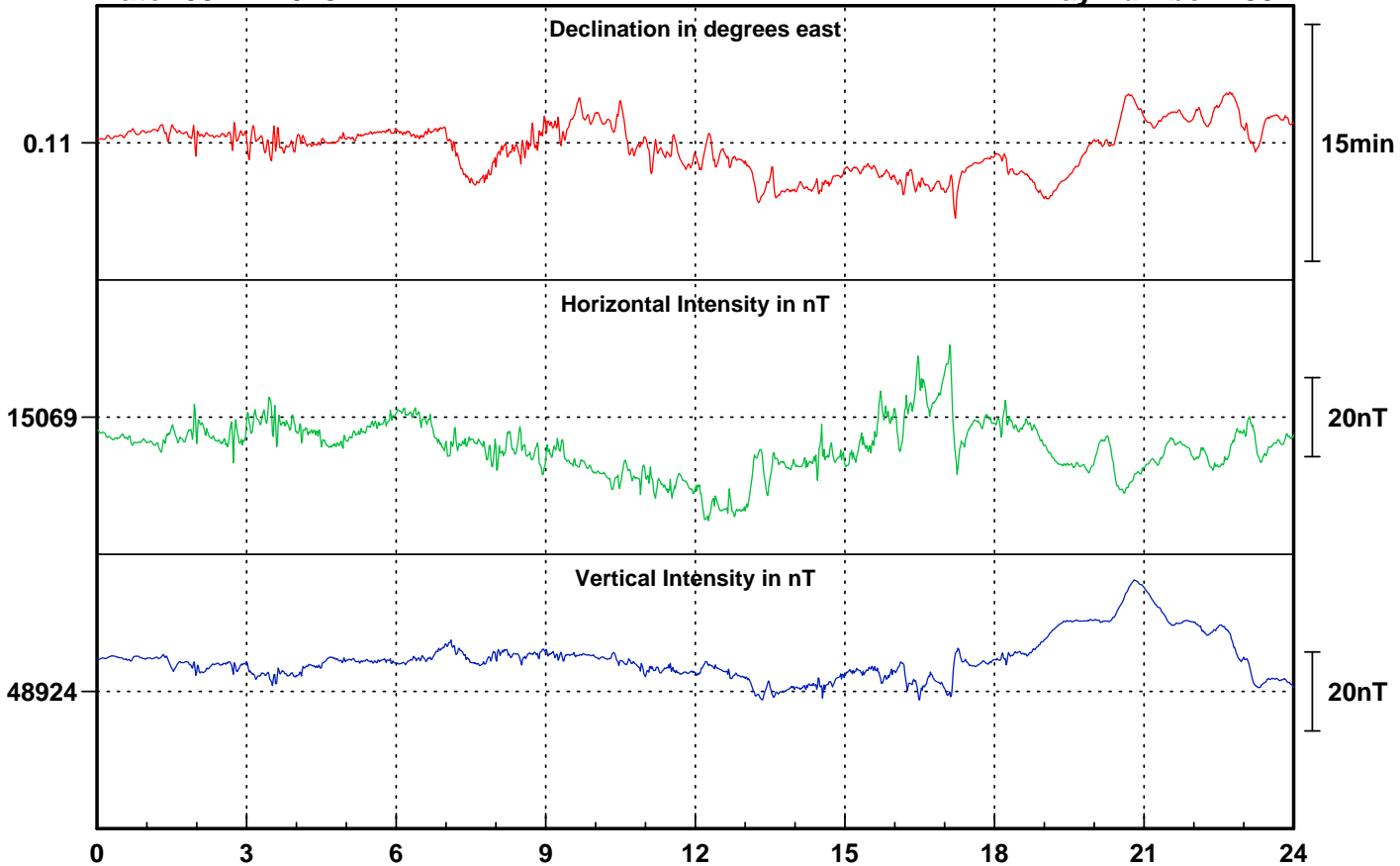
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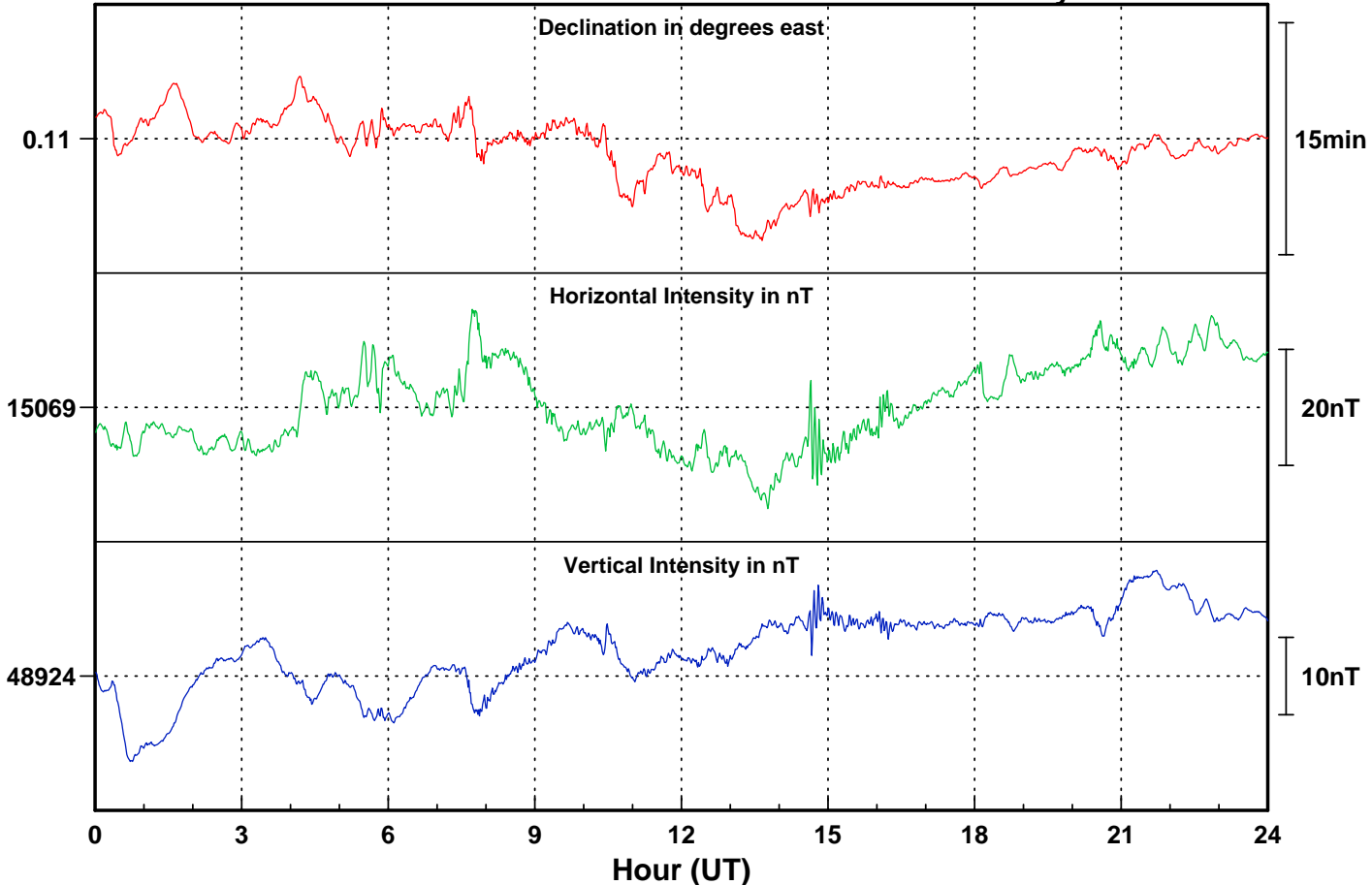
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Day number: 337



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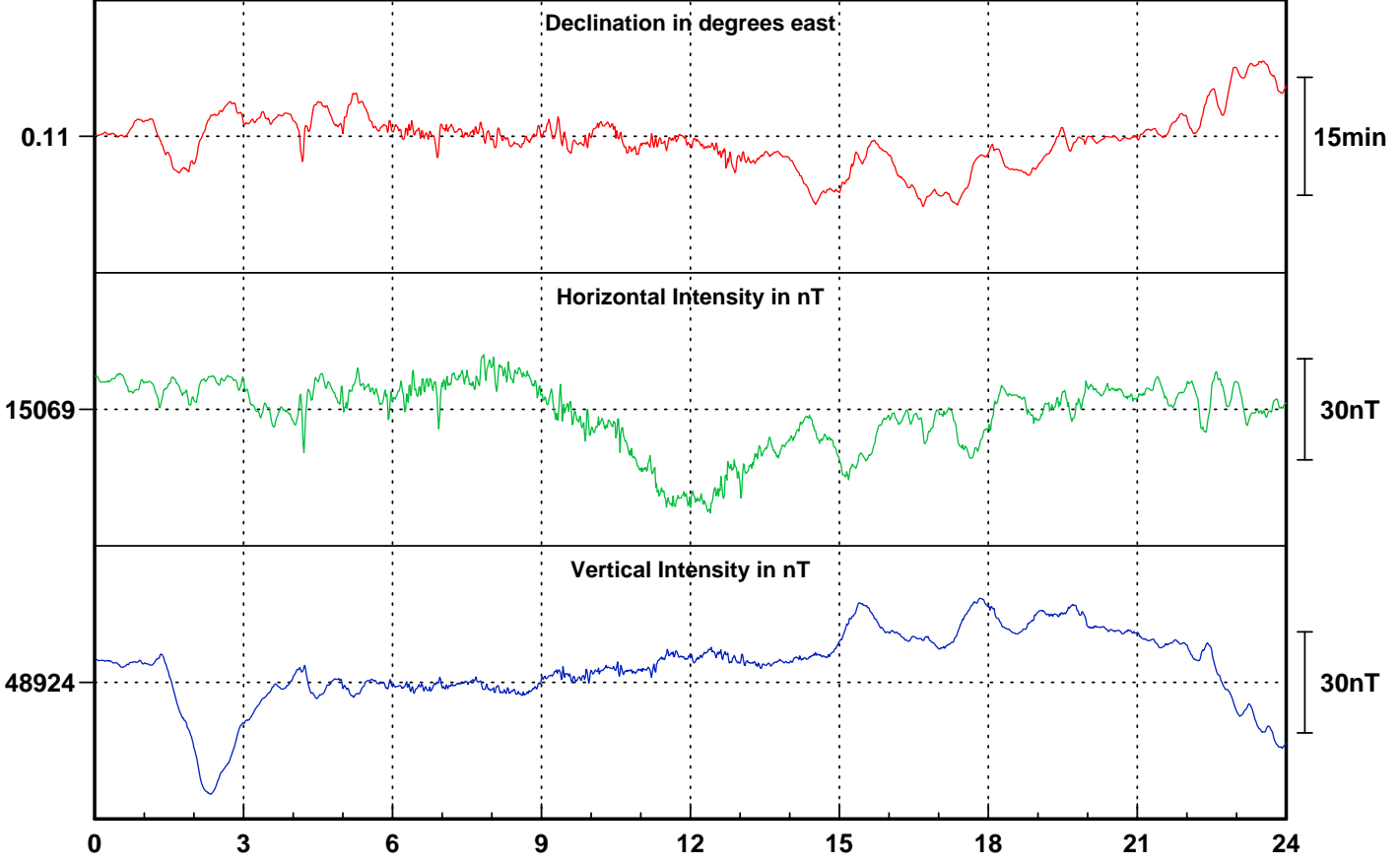
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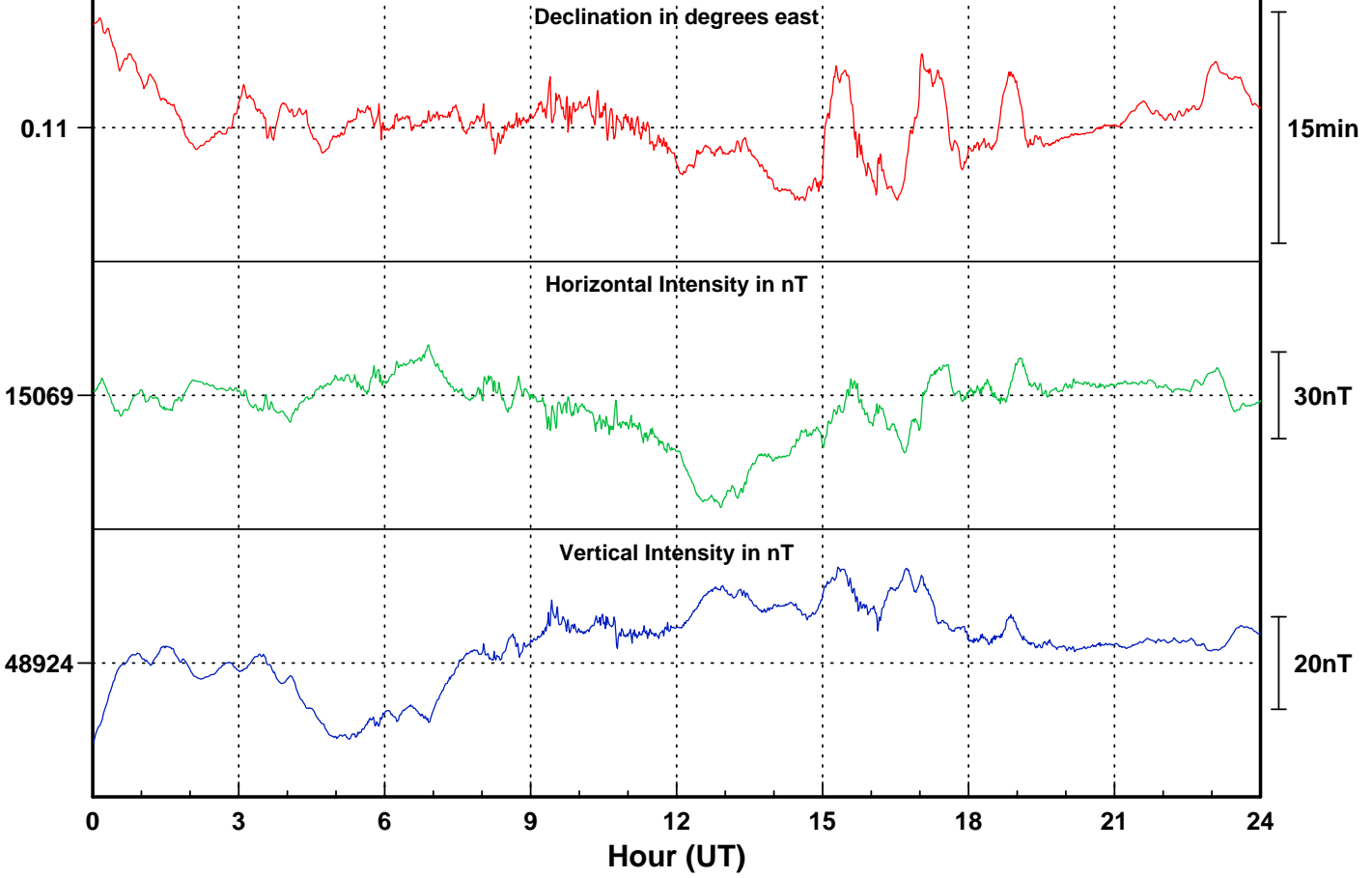
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Day number: 339



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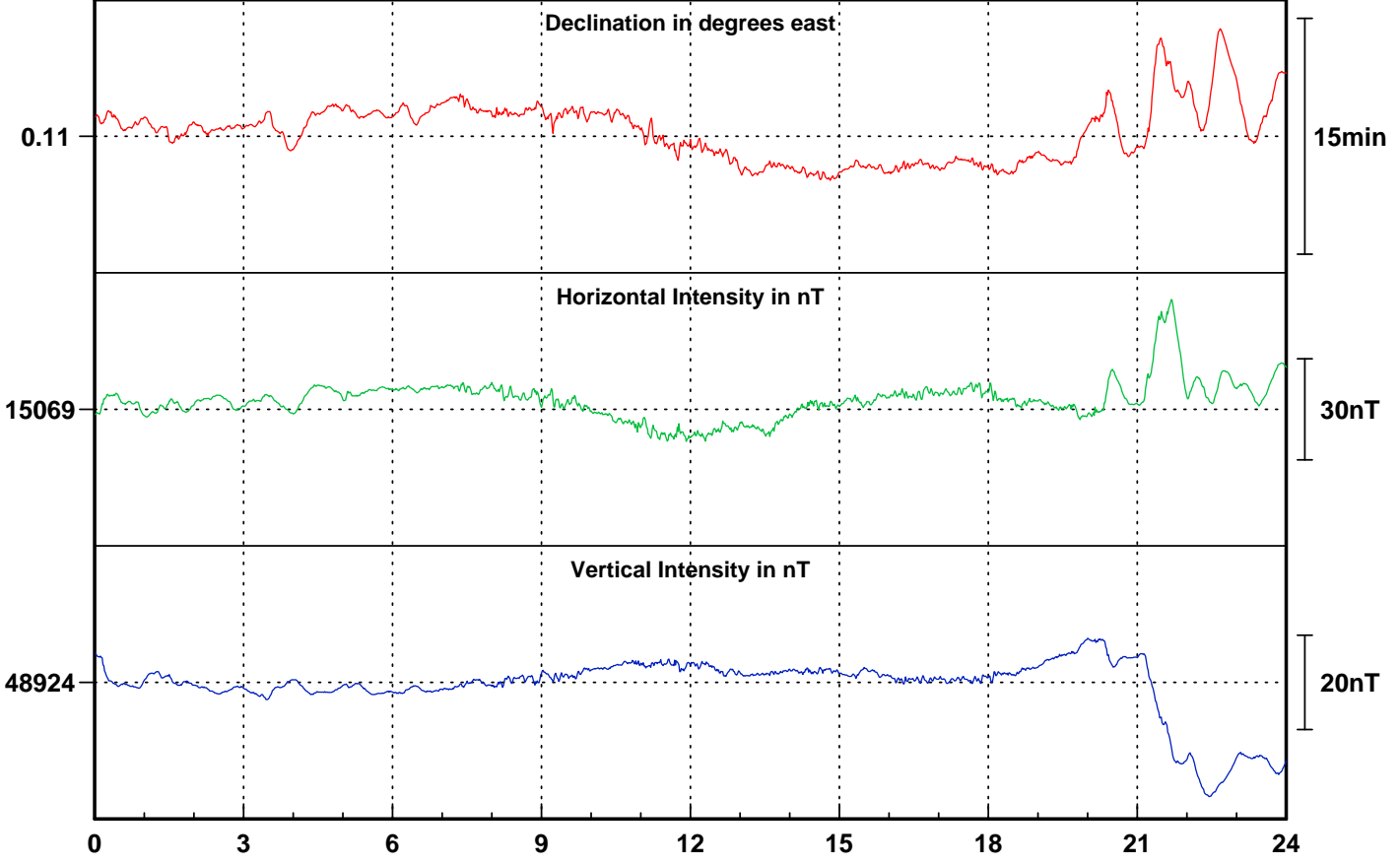
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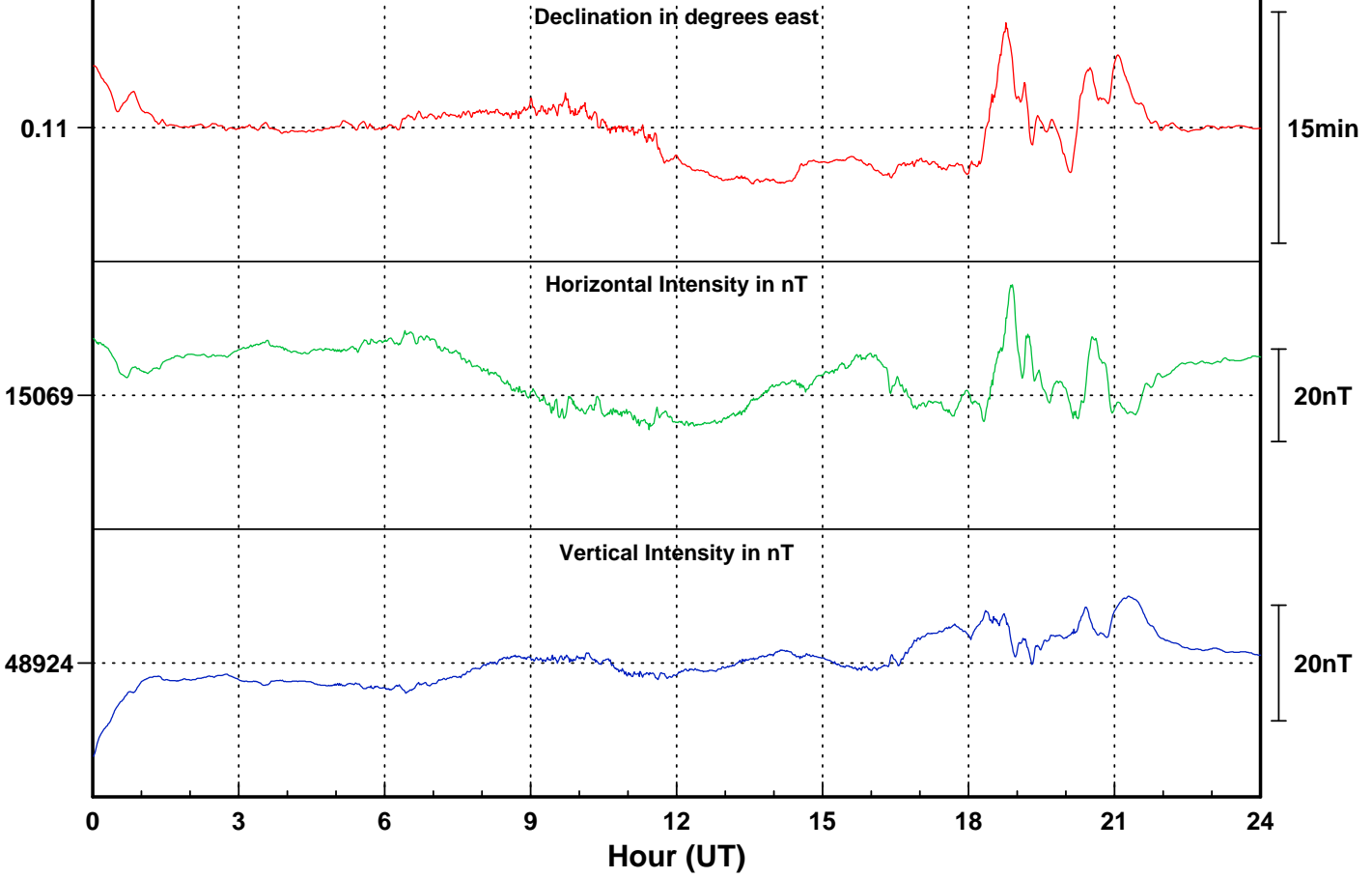
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Day number: 341



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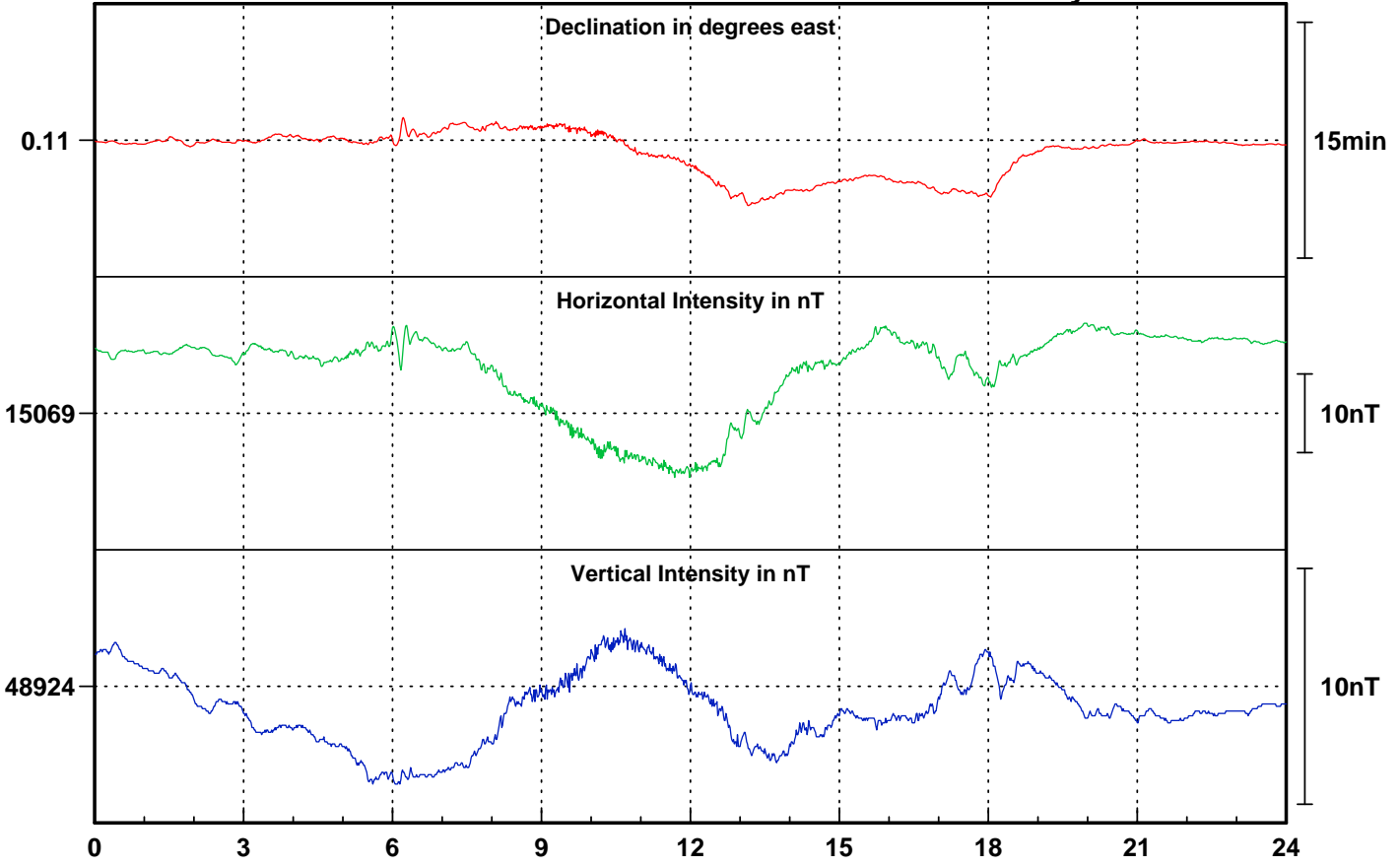
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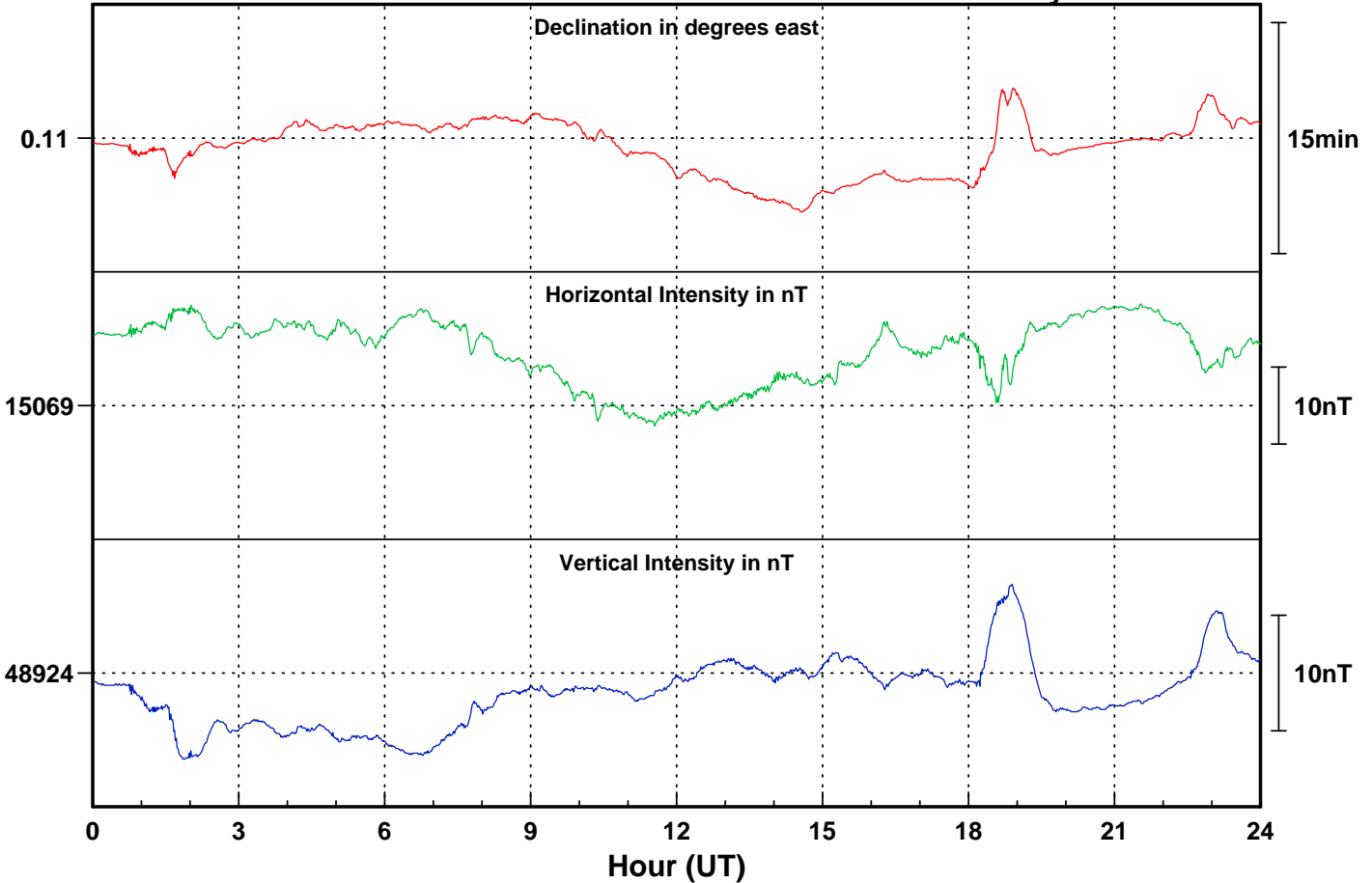
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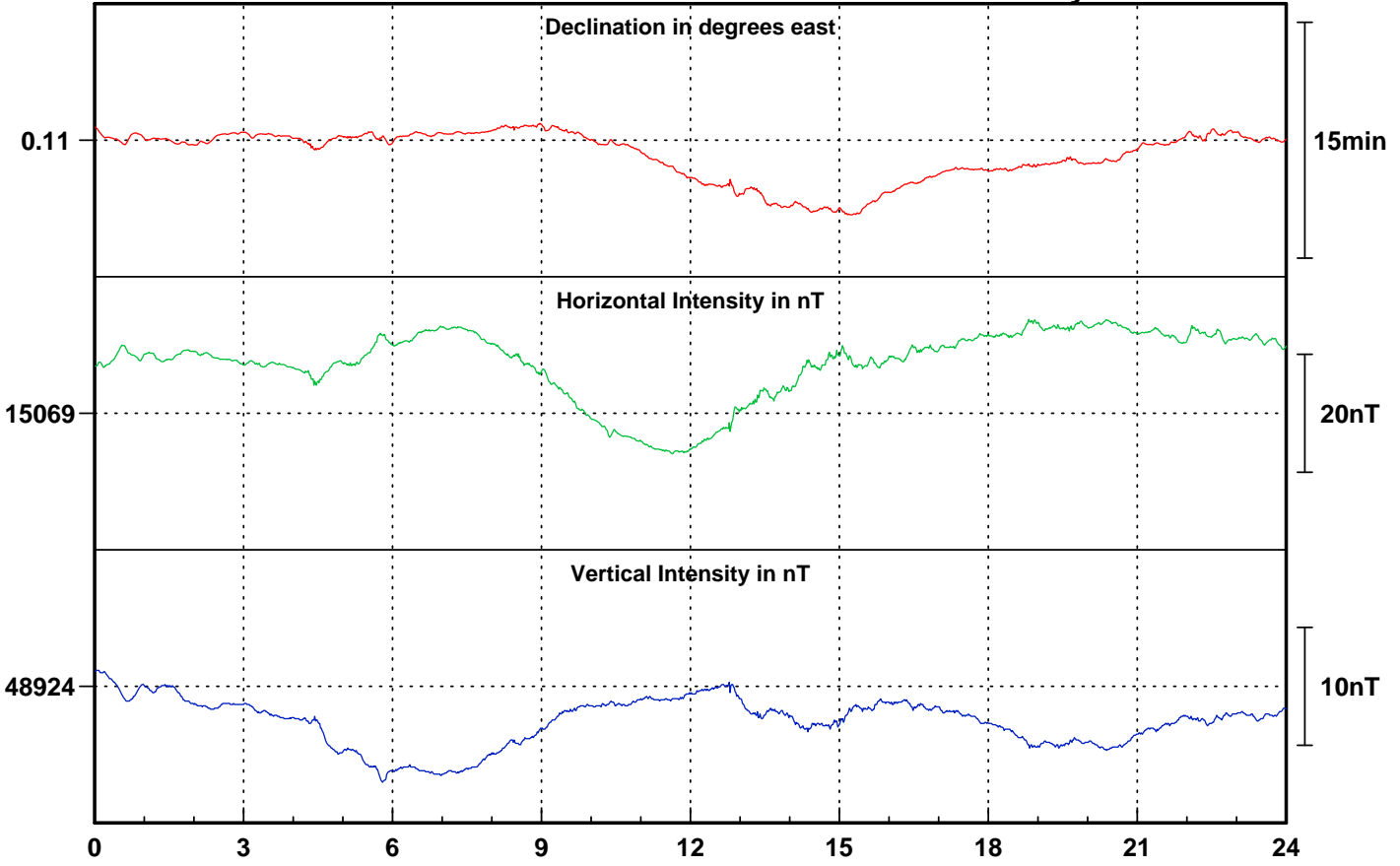
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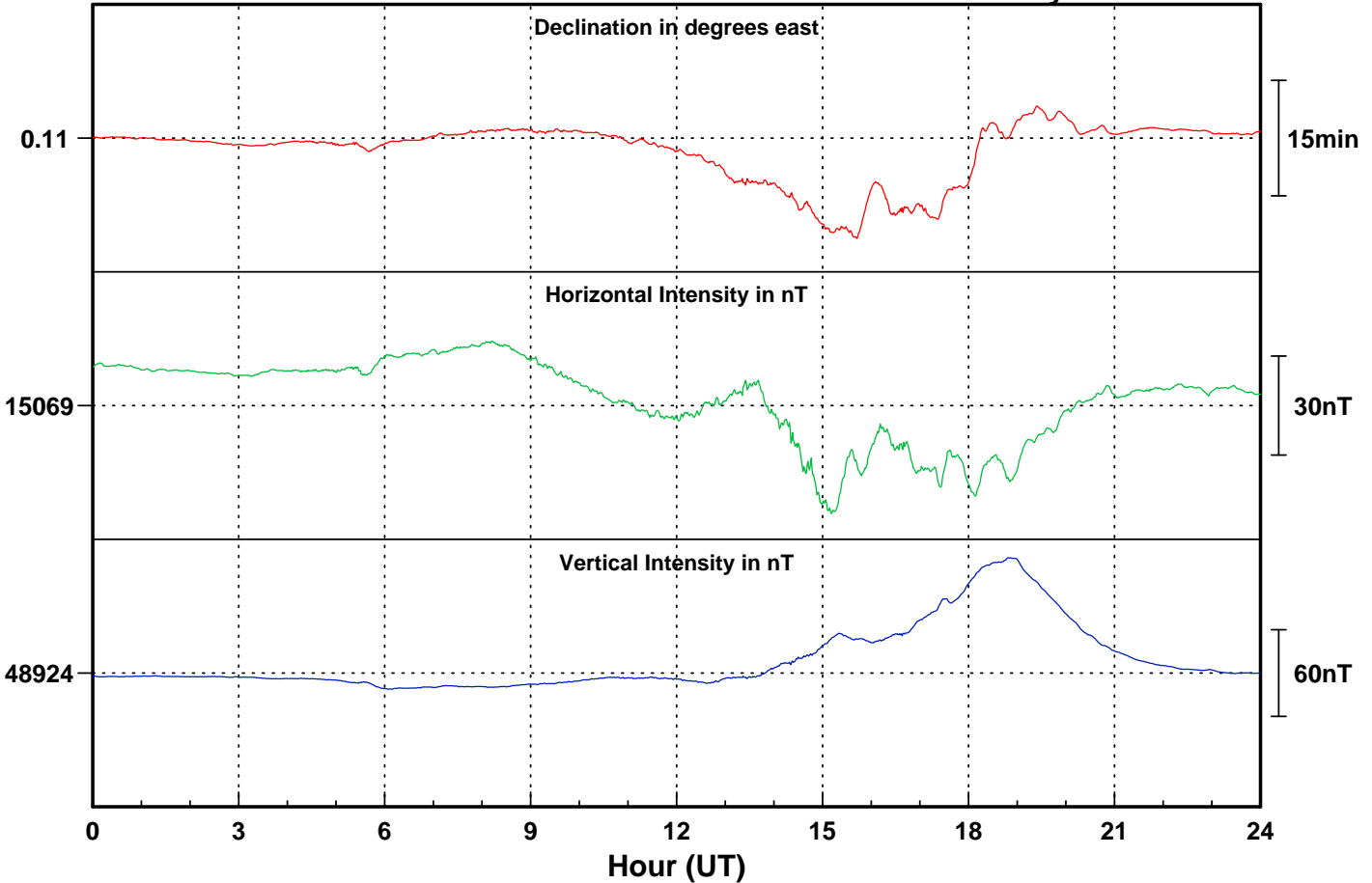
Lerwick

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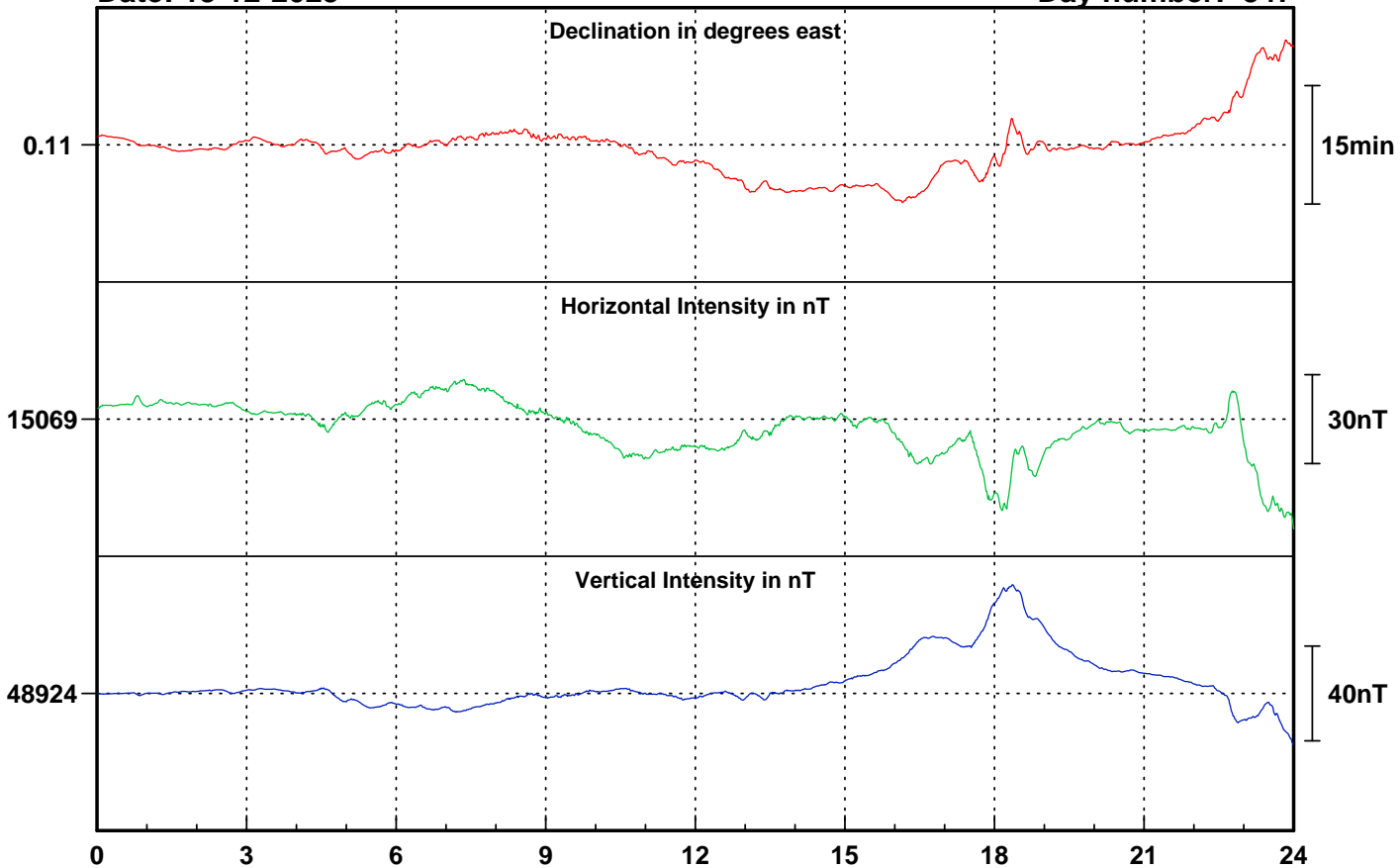
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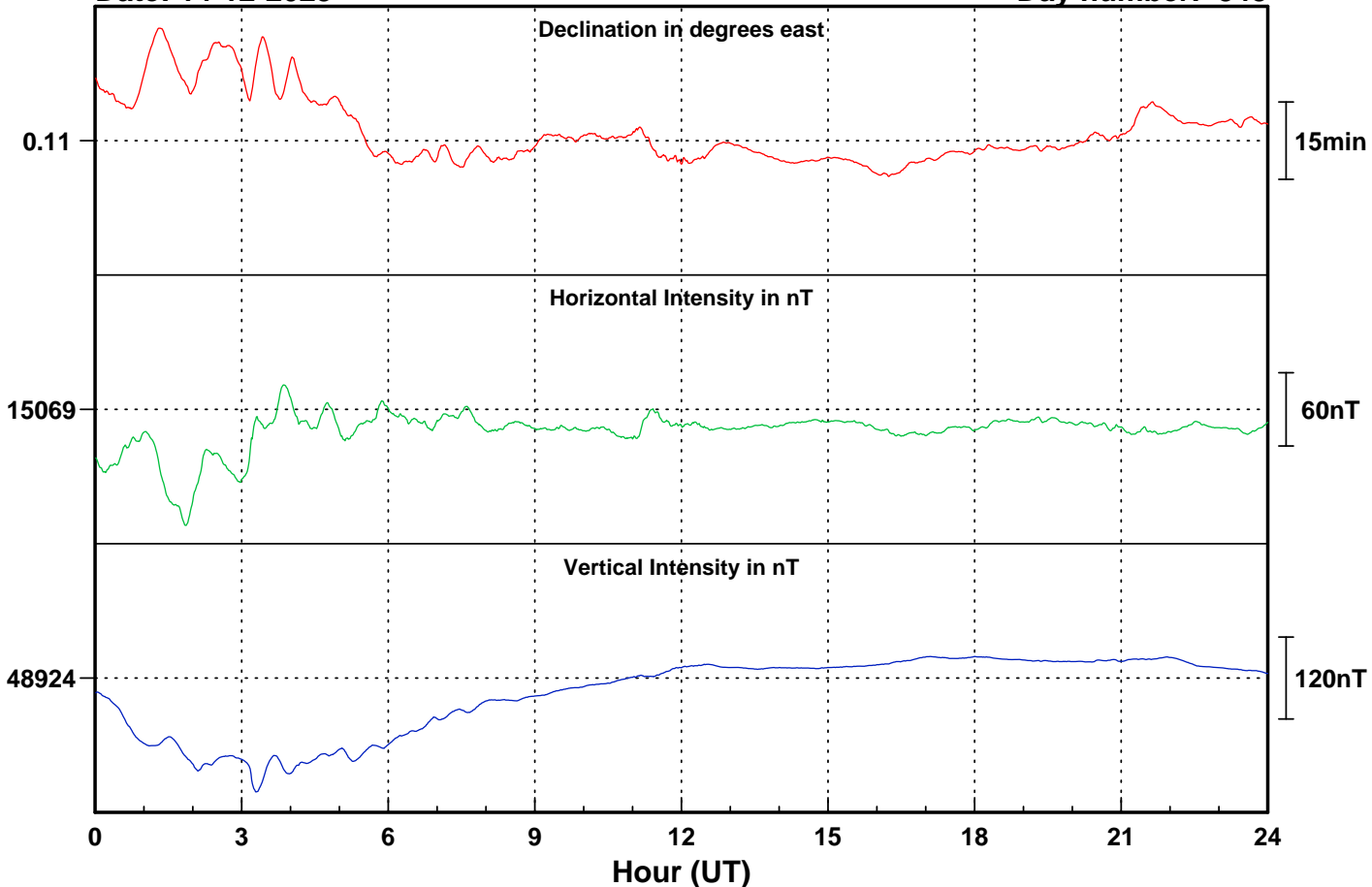
Lerwick

Day number: 347



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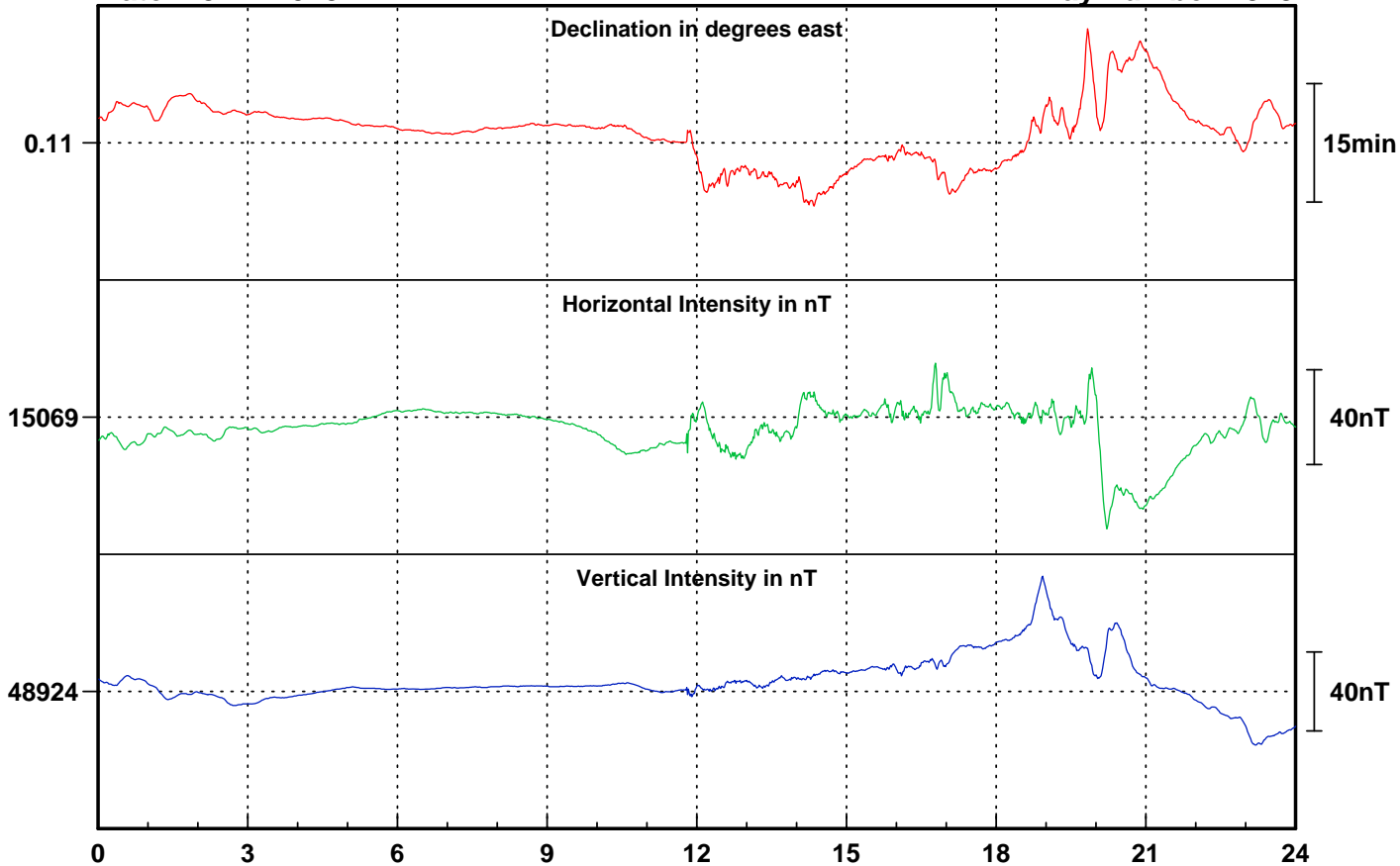
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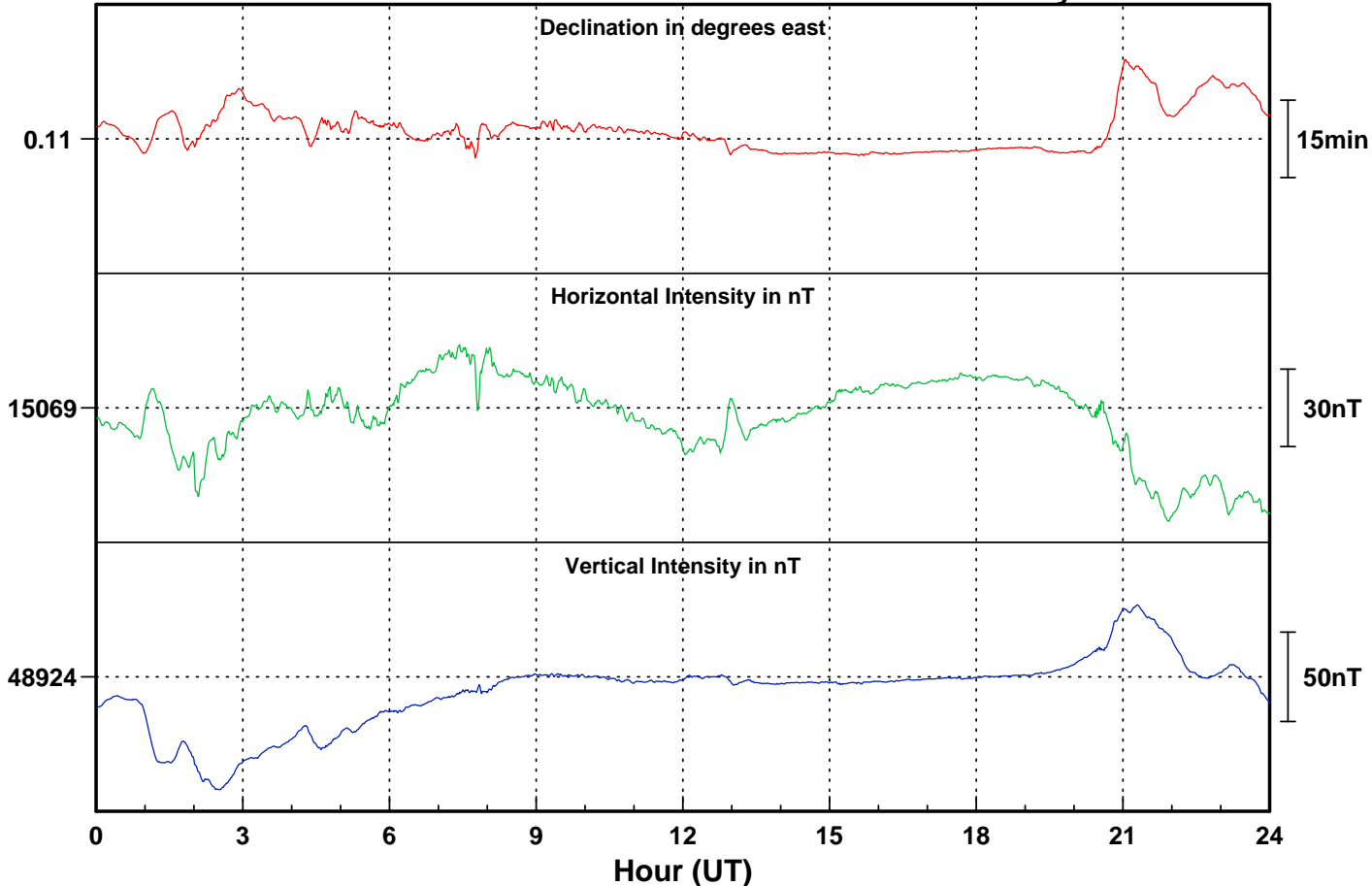
Lerwick

Day number: 349



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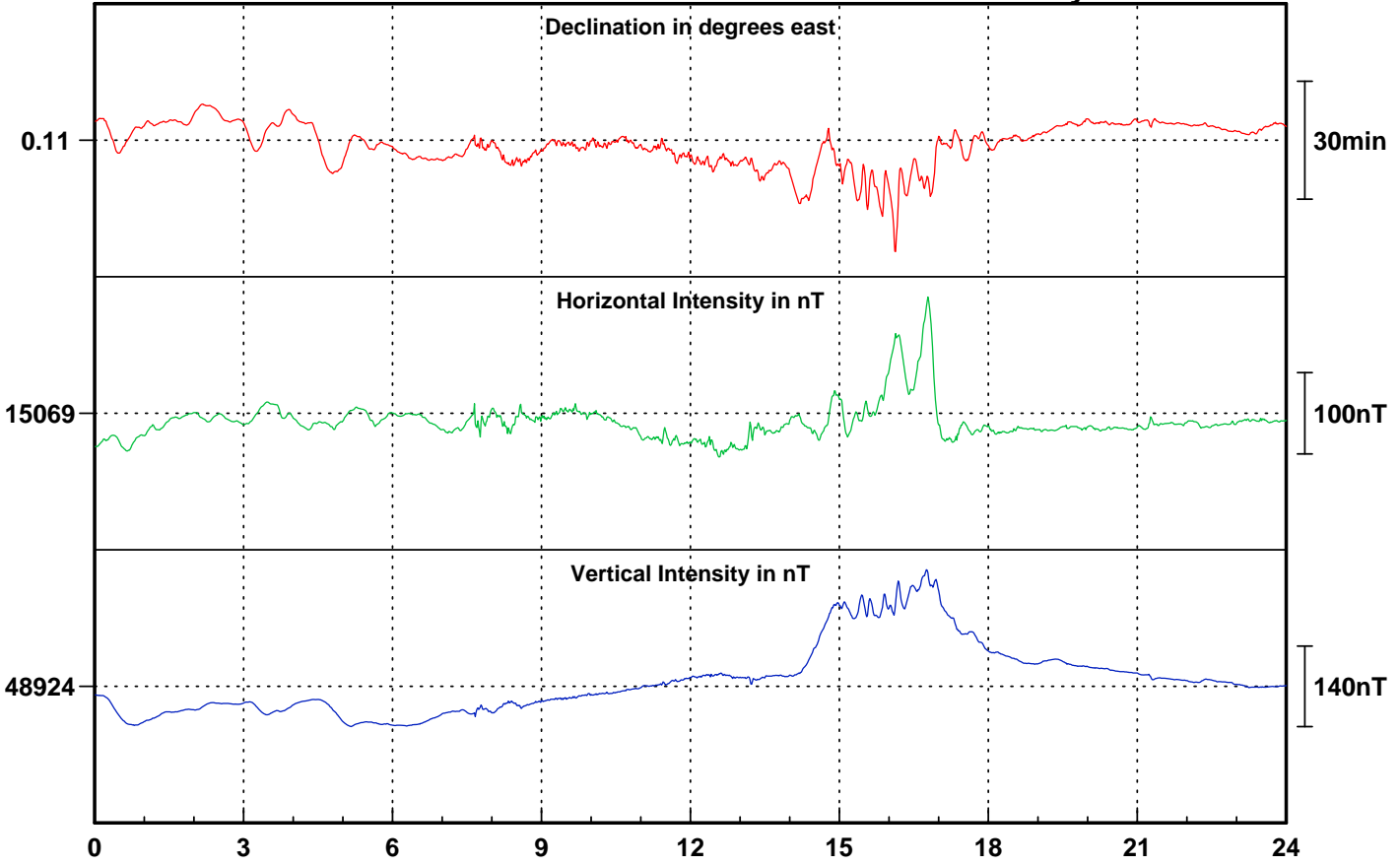
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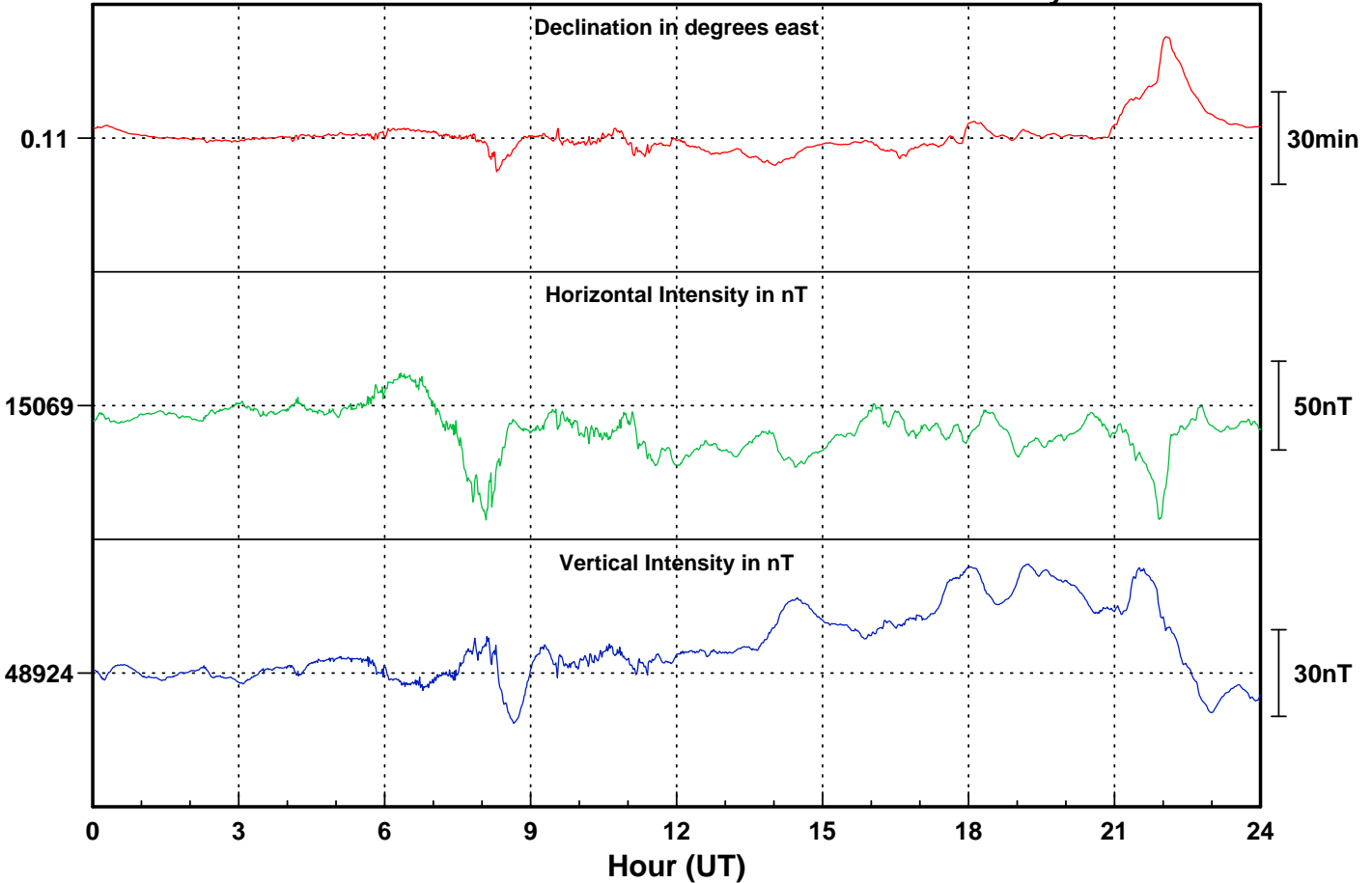
Lerwick

Day number: 351



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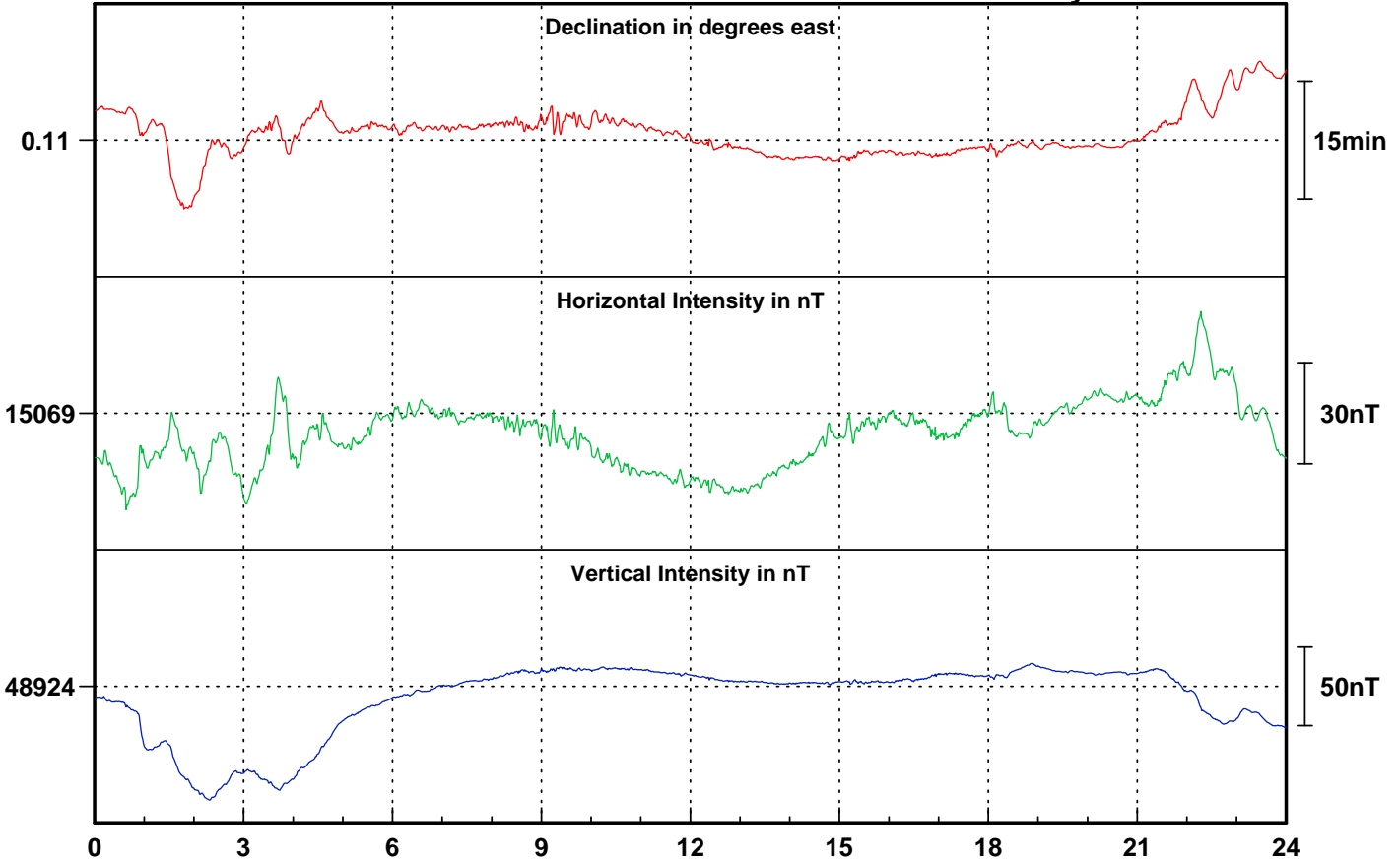
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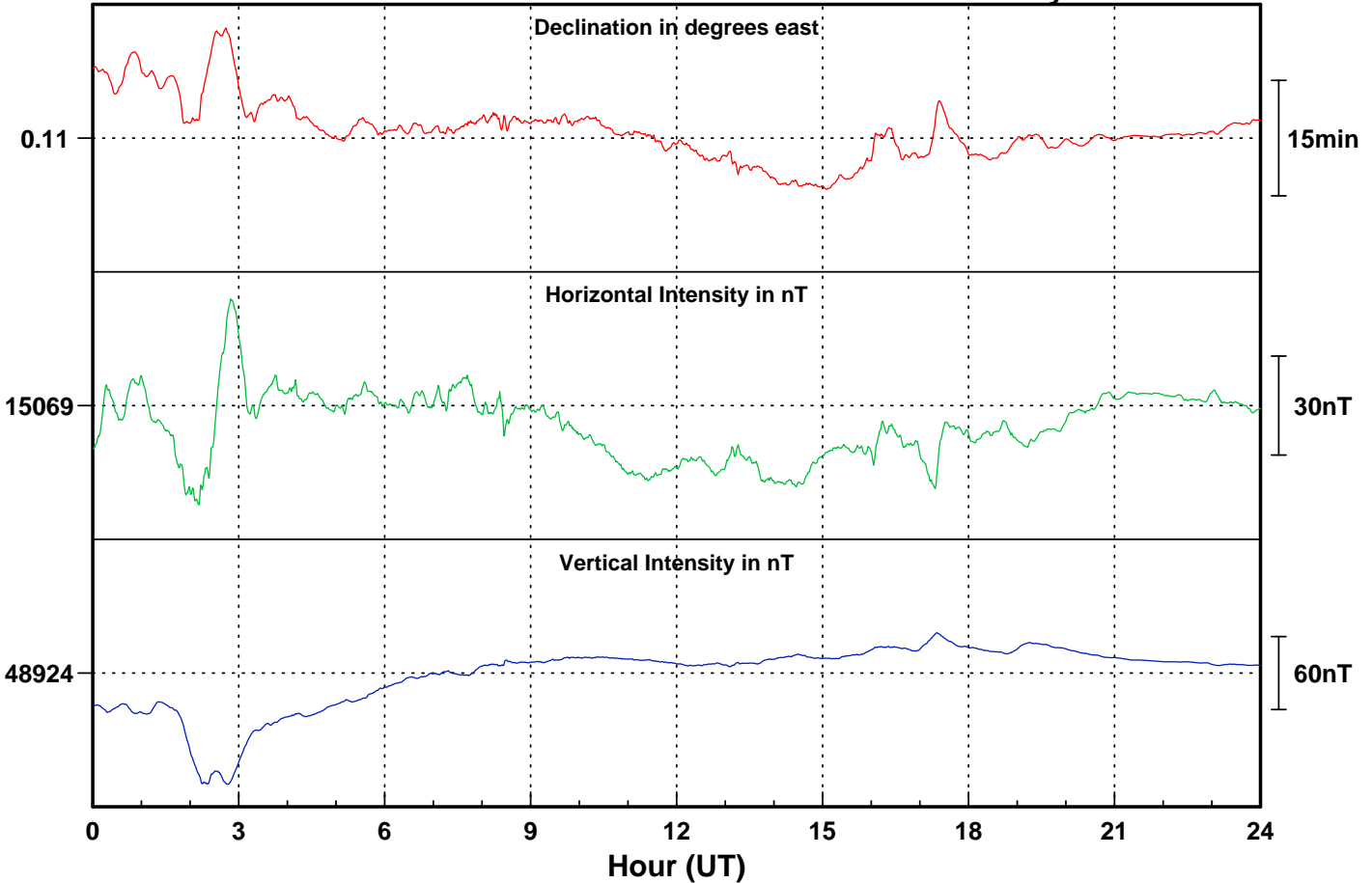
Lerwick

Day number: 353



Date: 20-12-2023

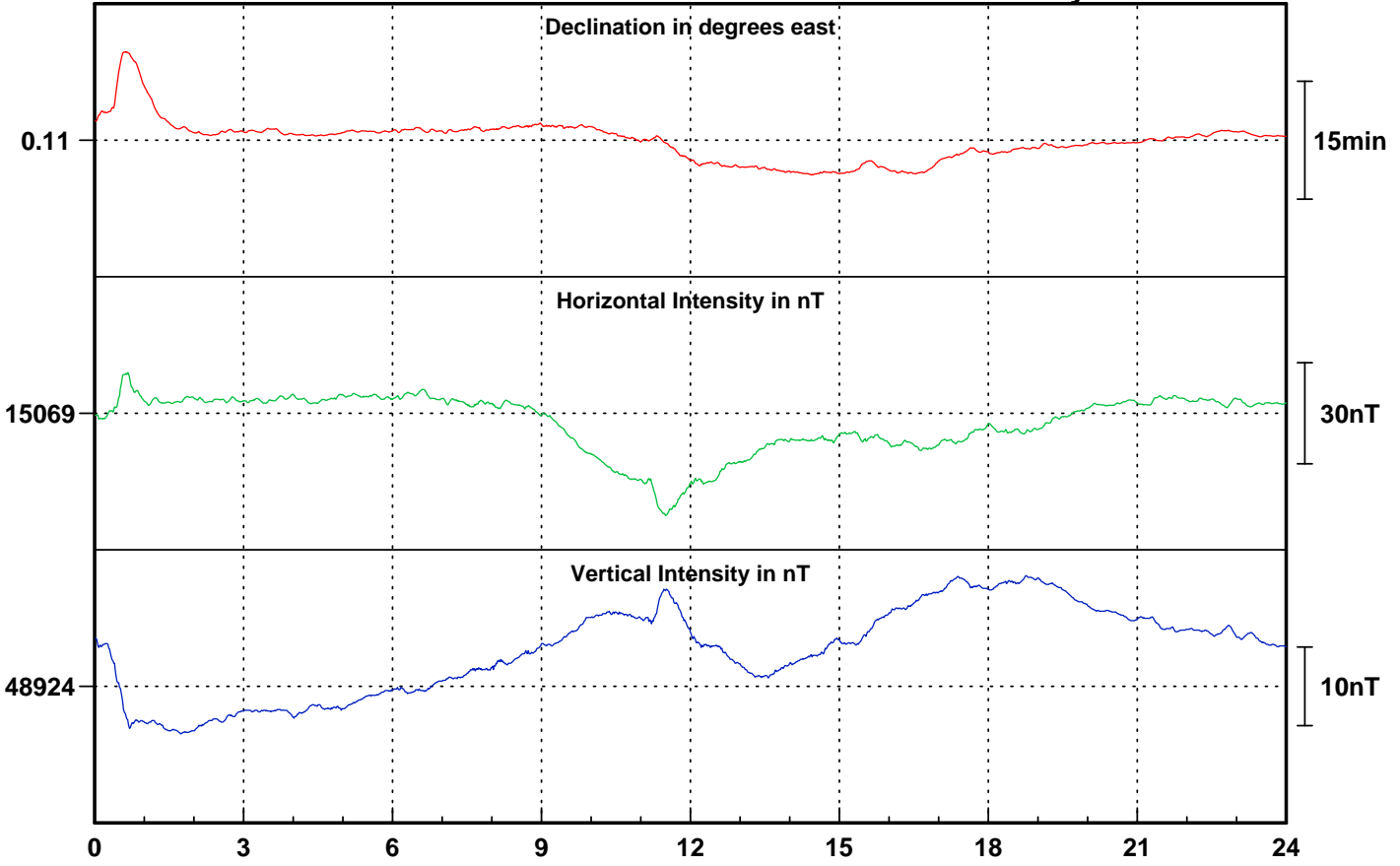
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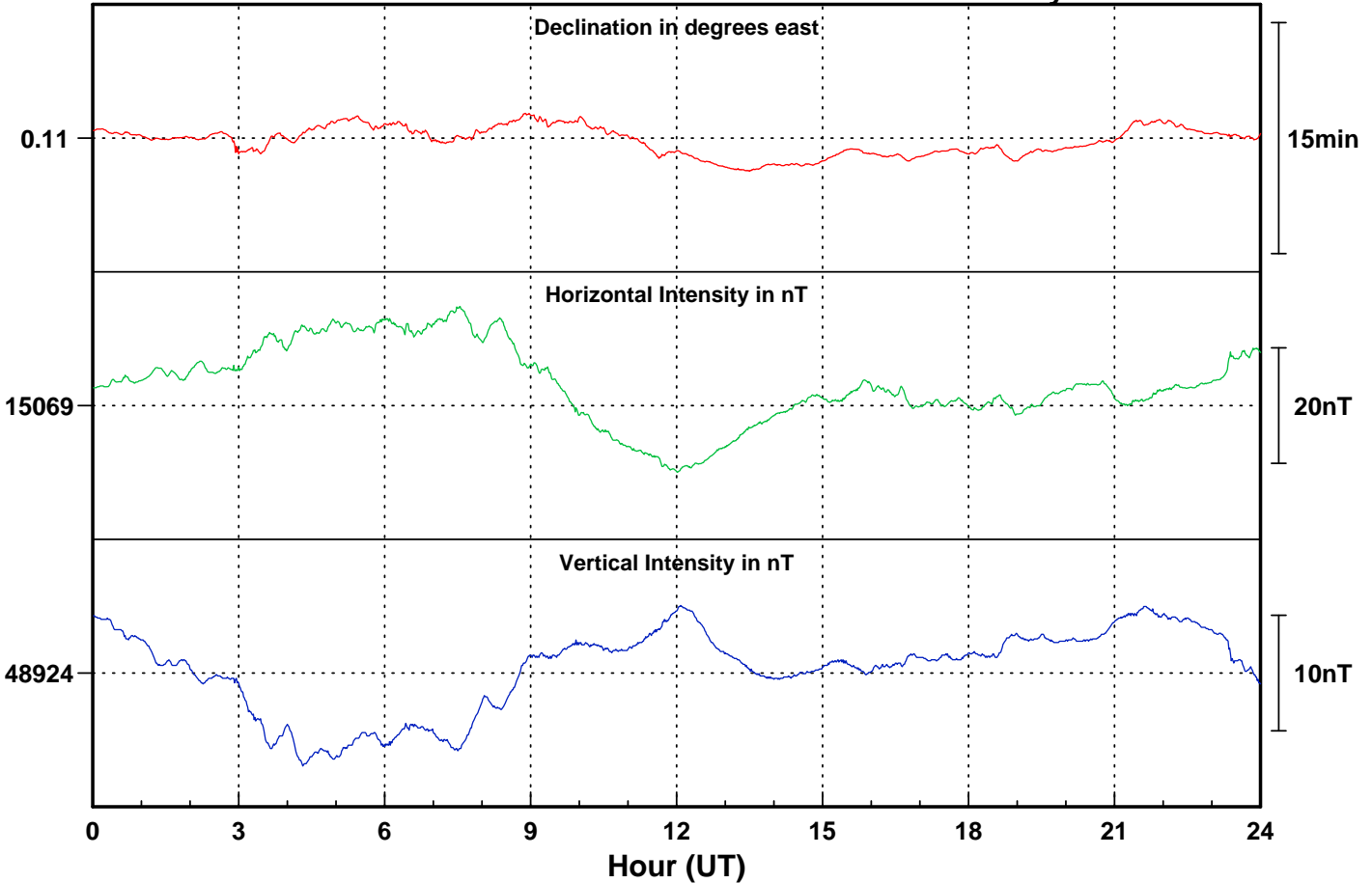
Lerwick

Day number: 355



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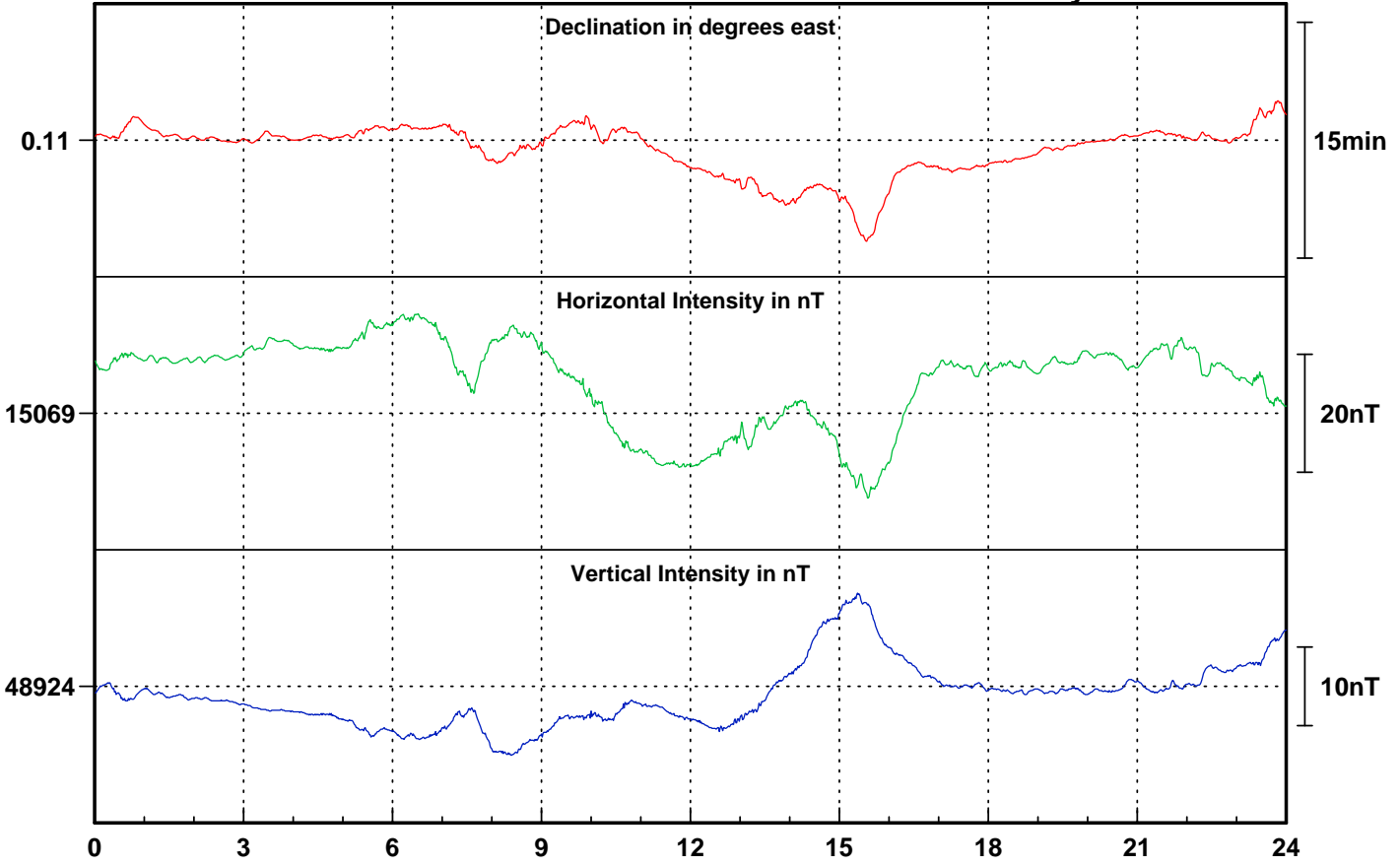
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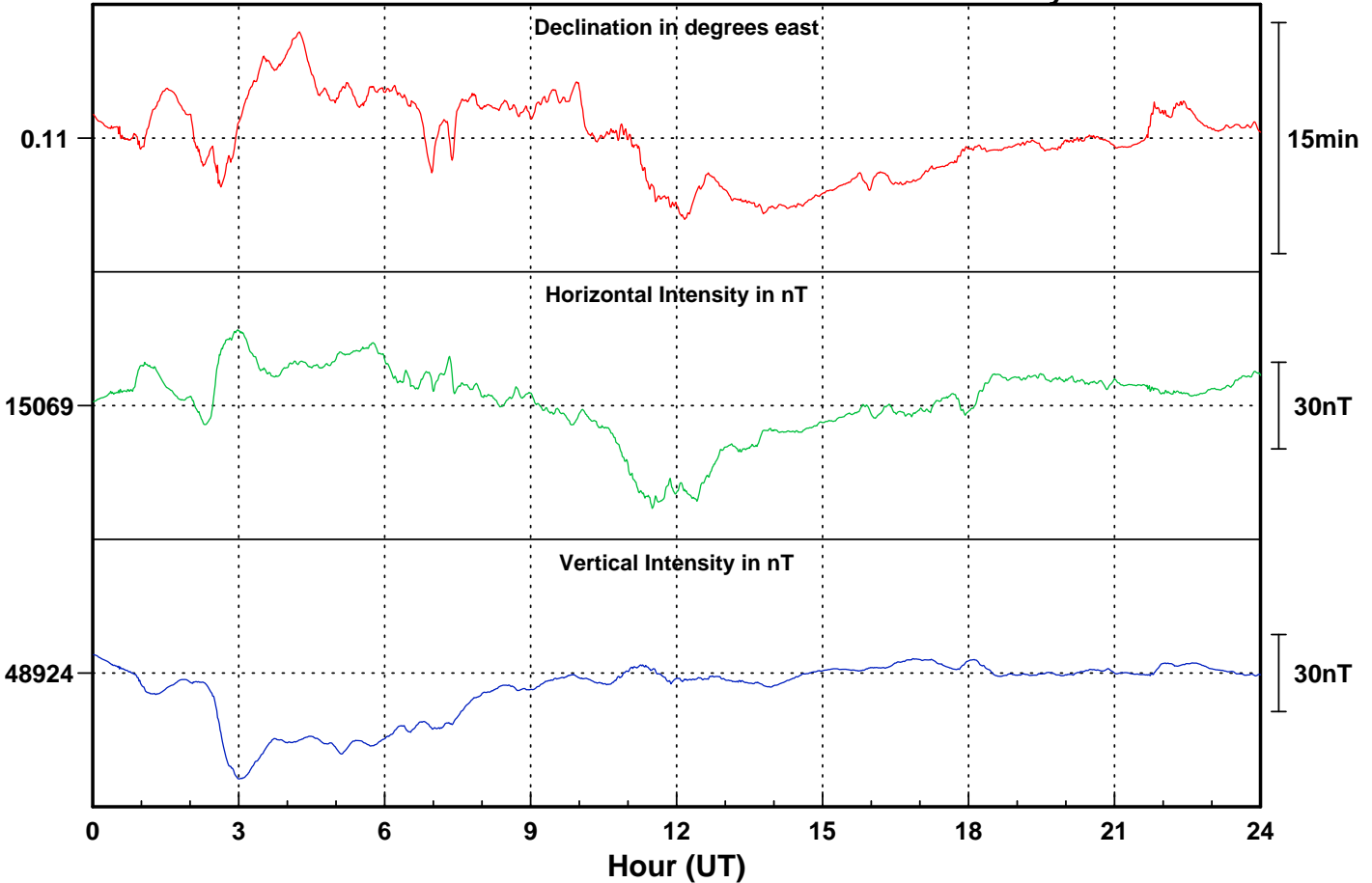
Lerwick

Day number: 357



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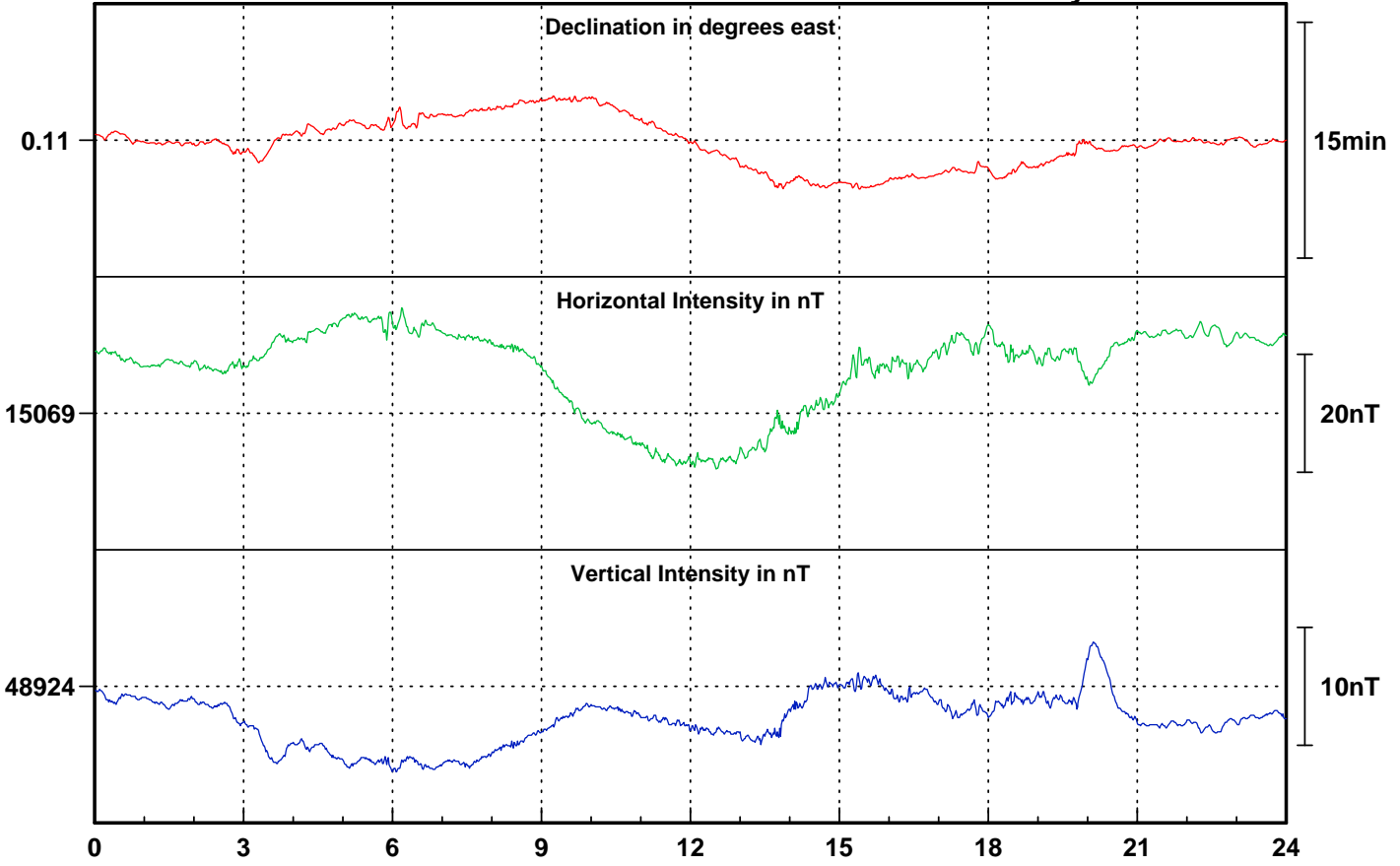
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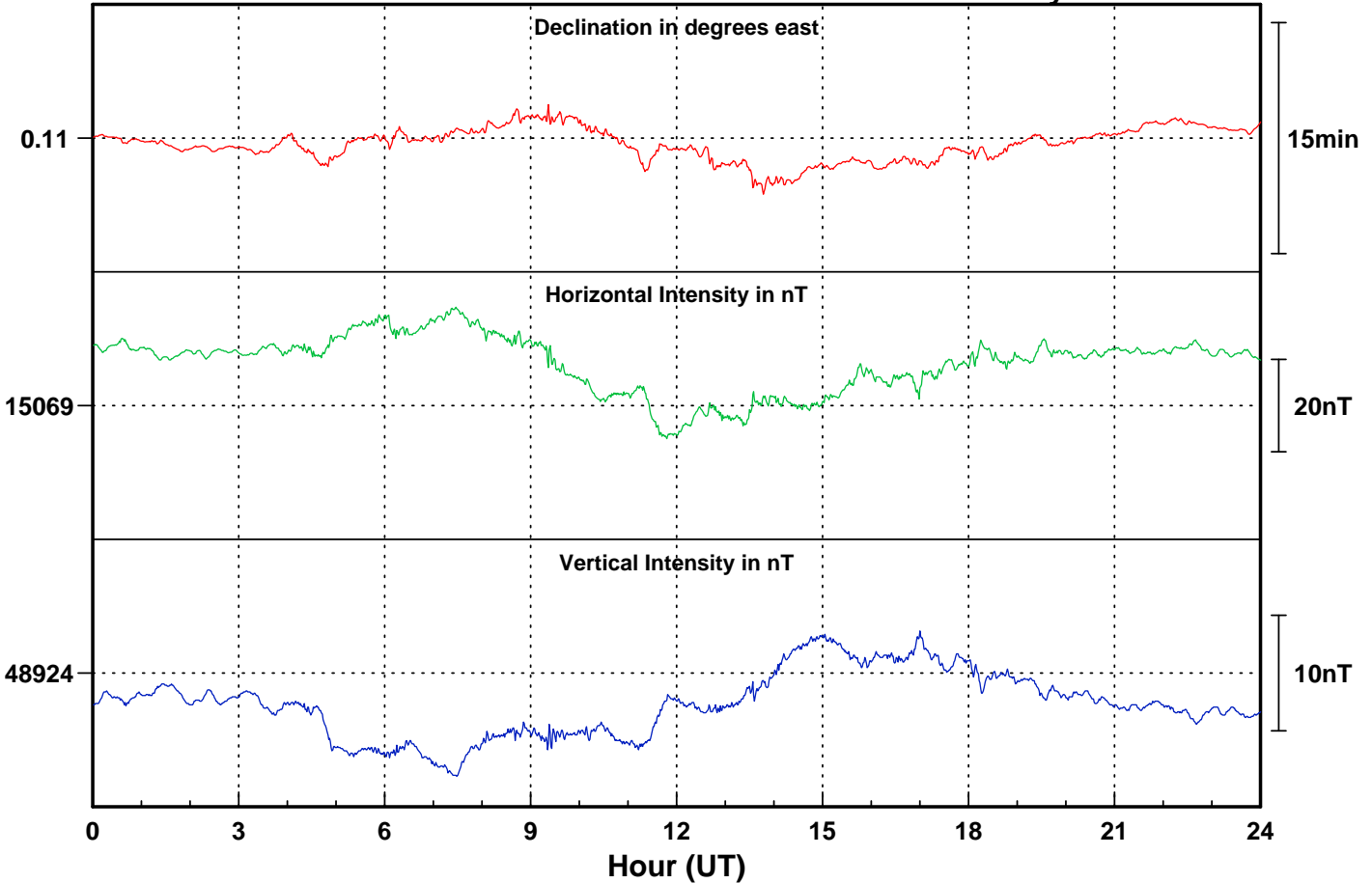
Lerwick

Day number: 359



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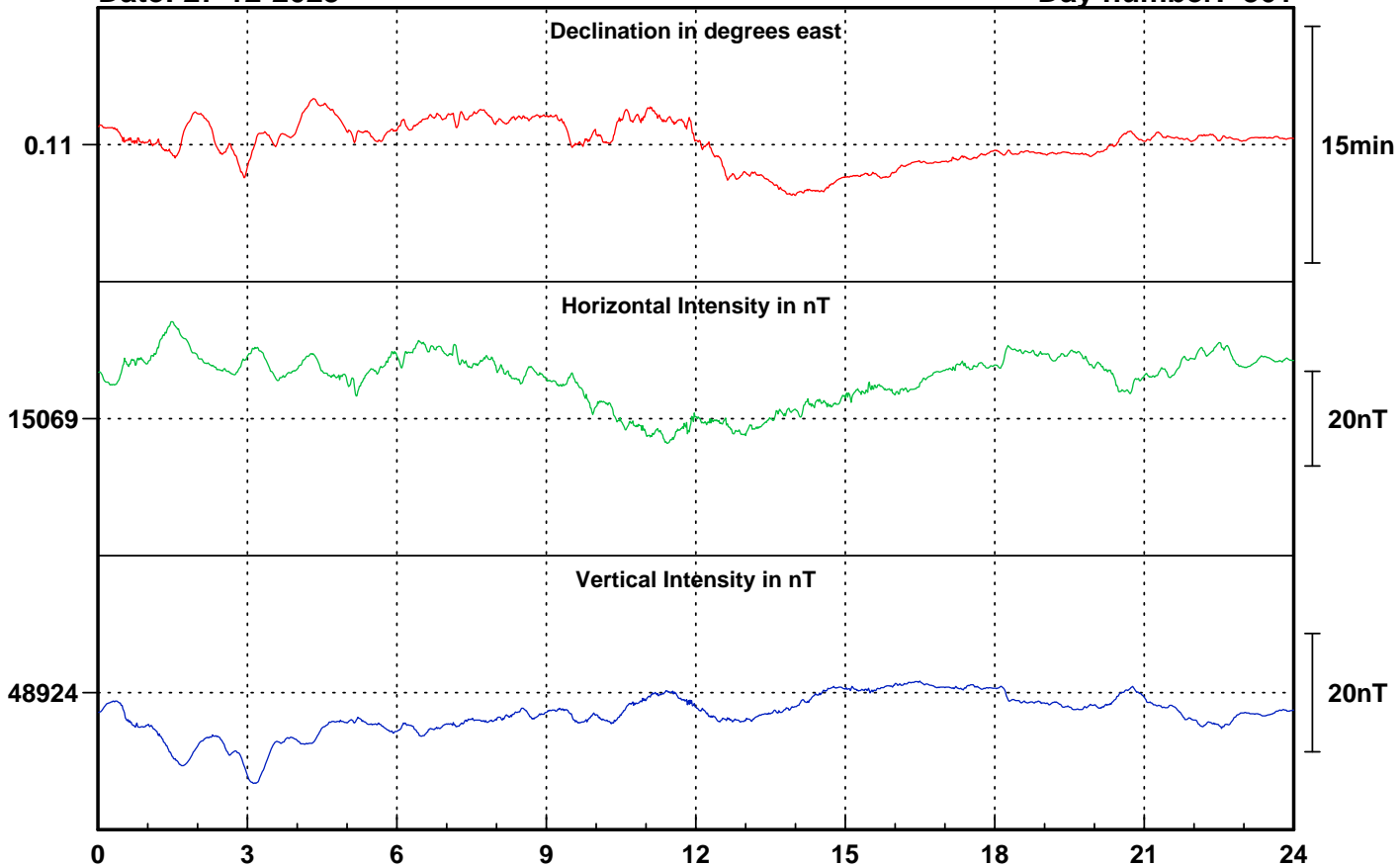
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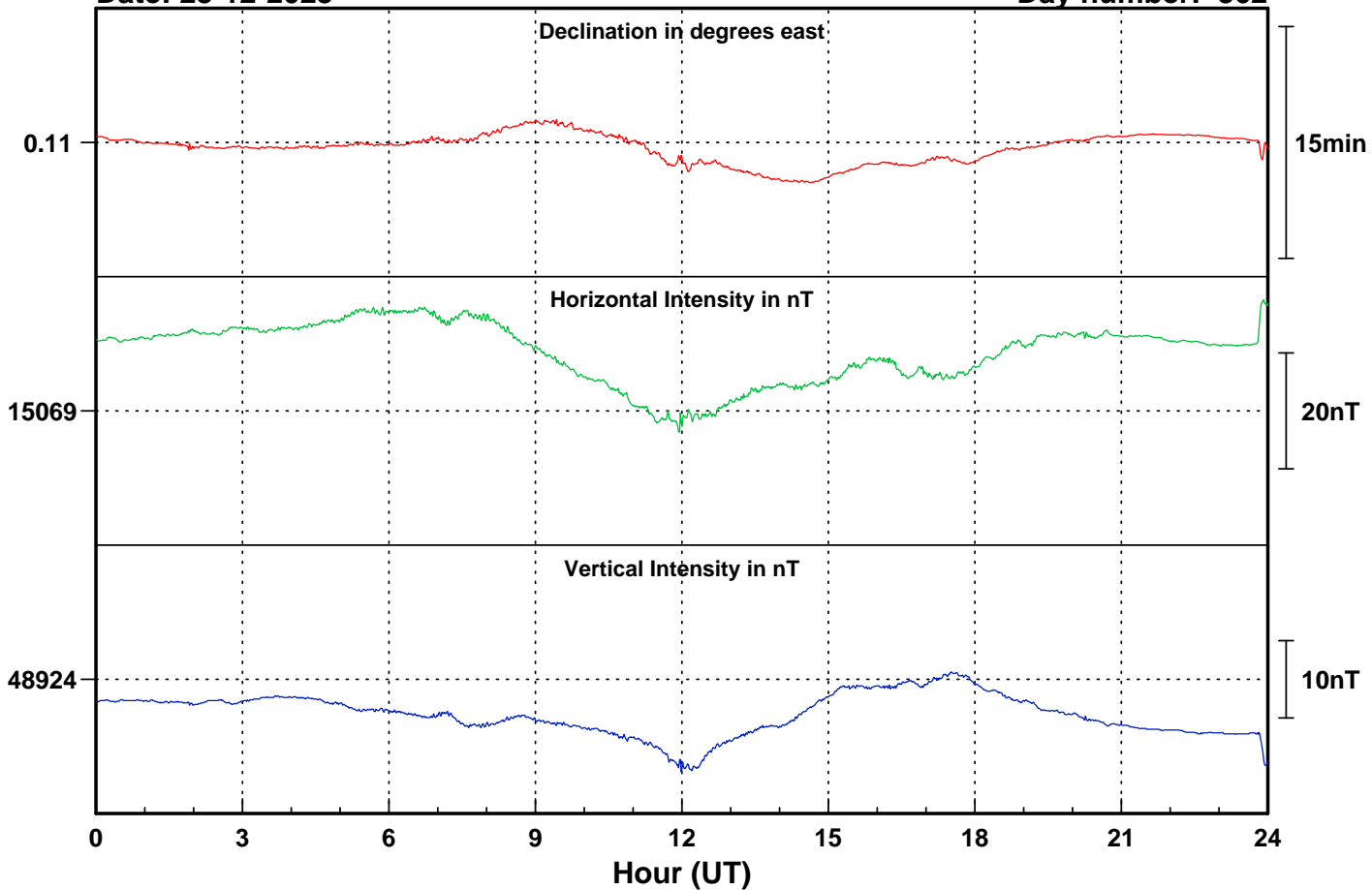
Lerwick

Day number: 361



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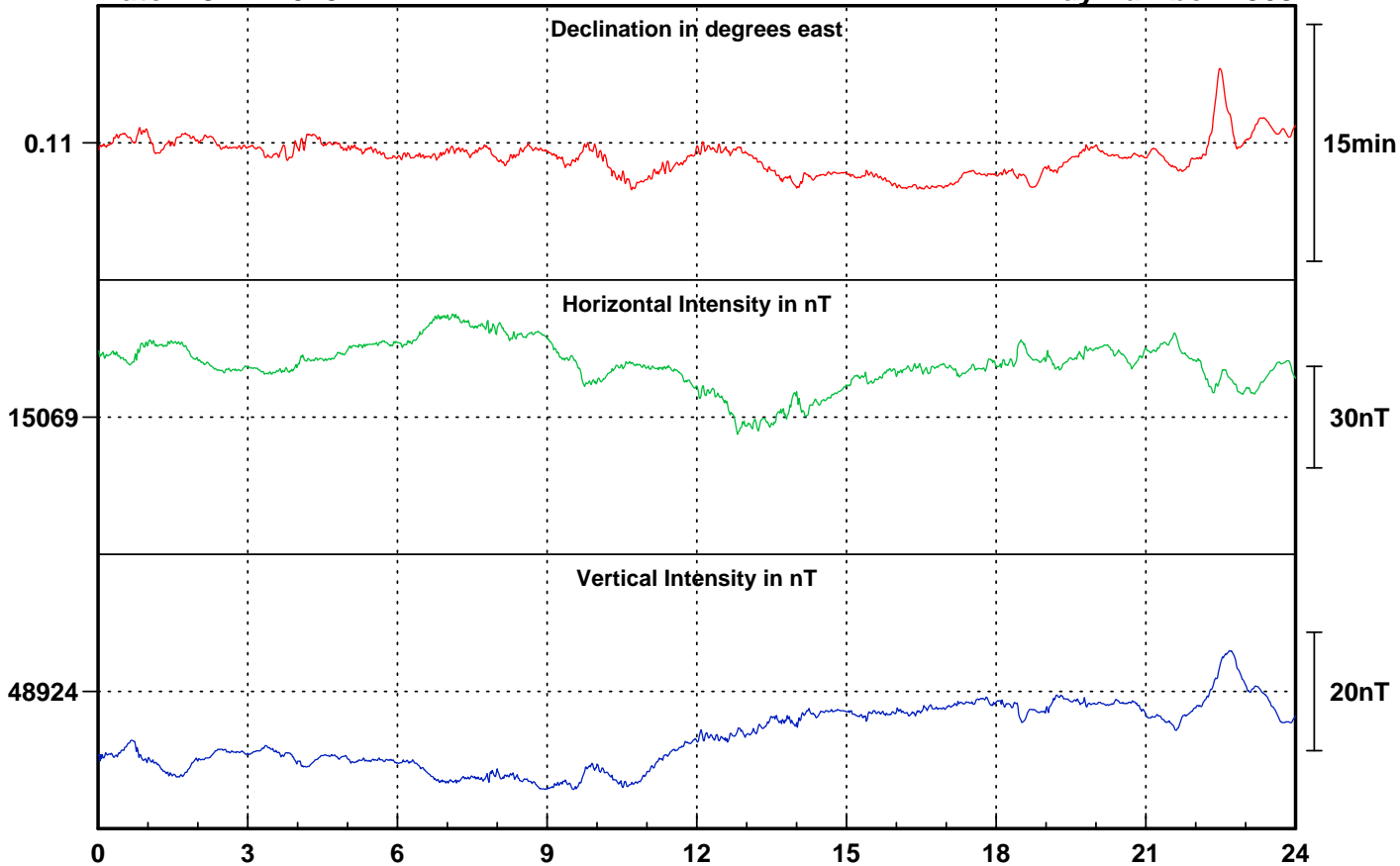
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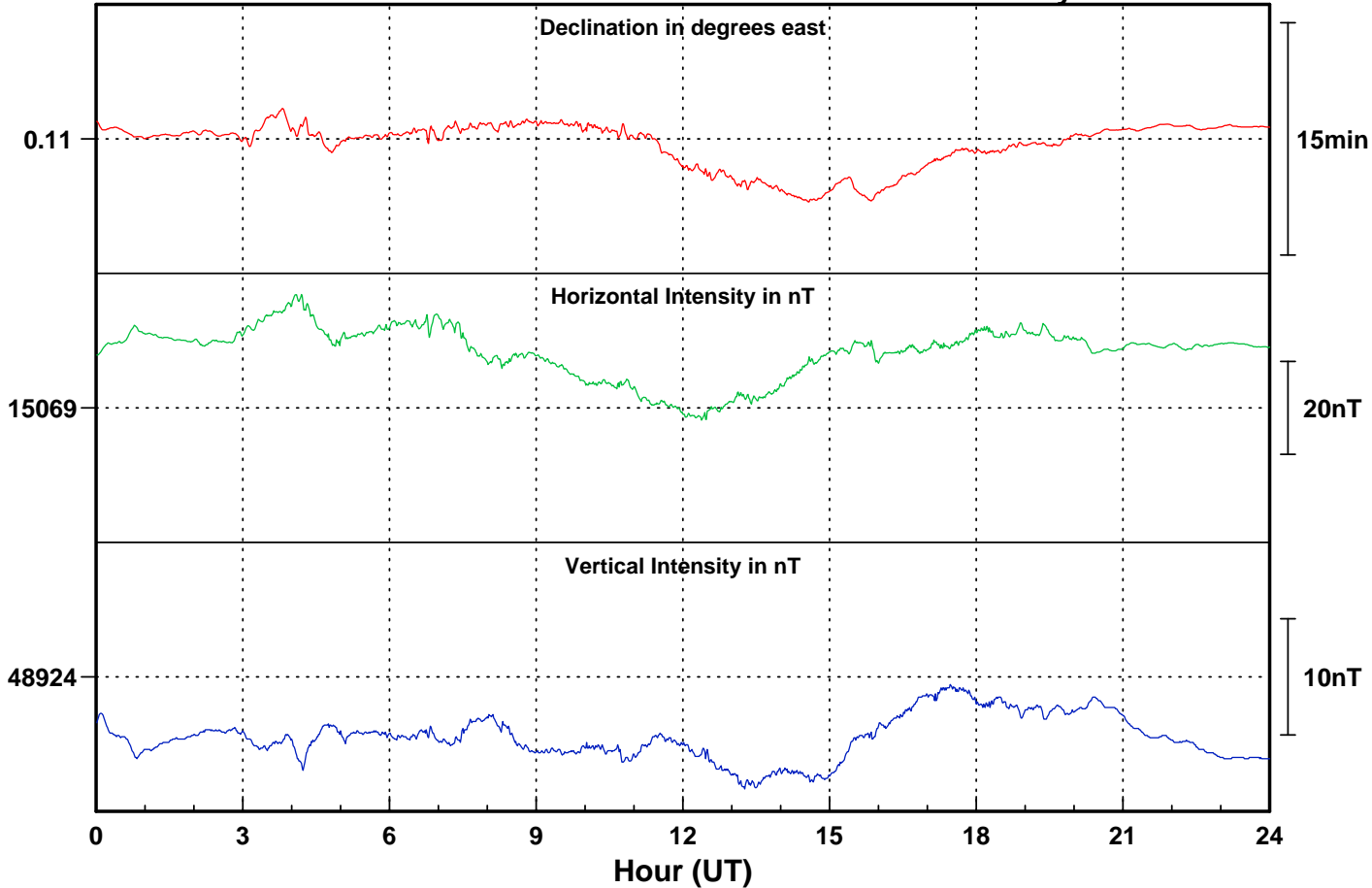
Lerwick

Day number: 363



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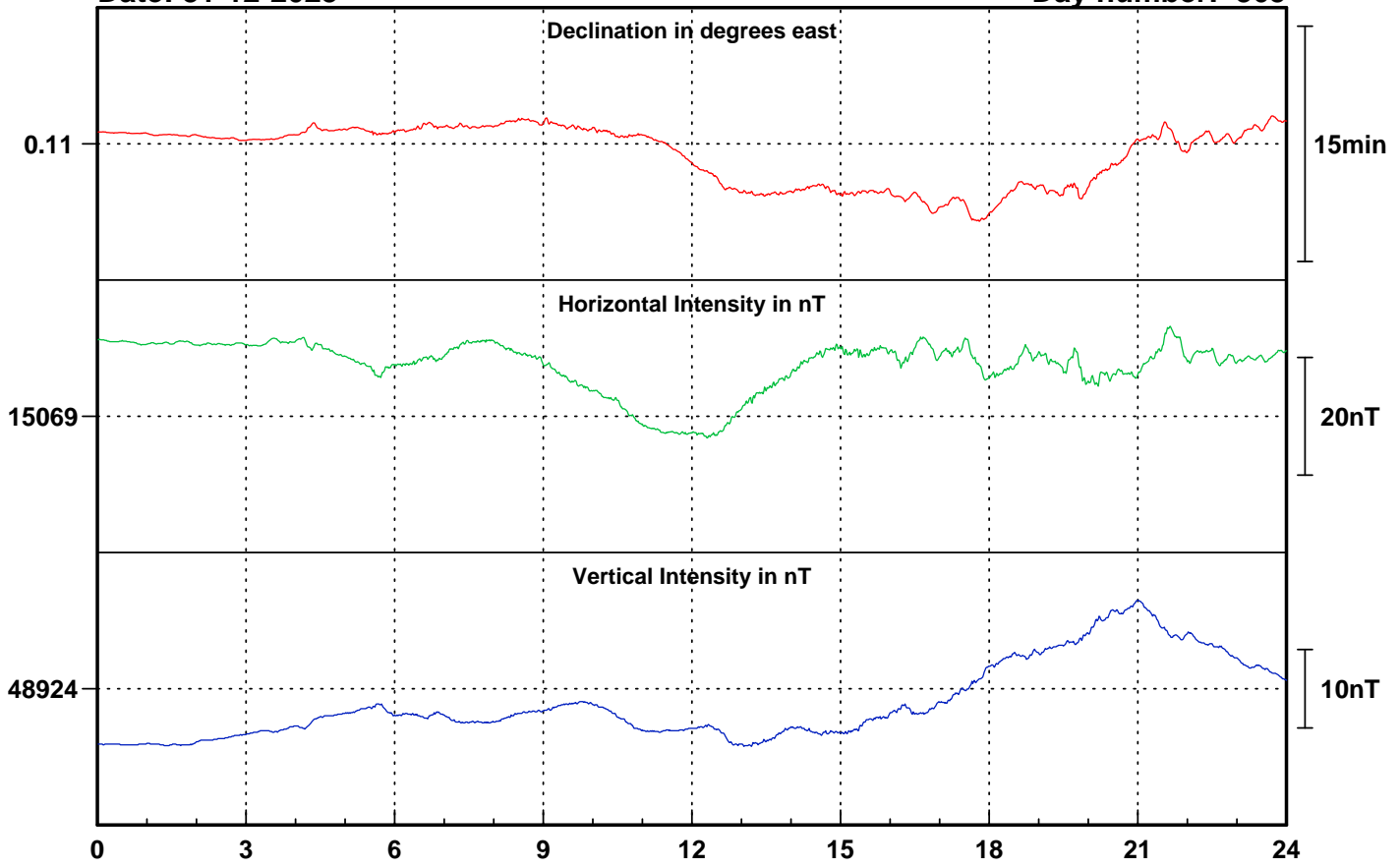
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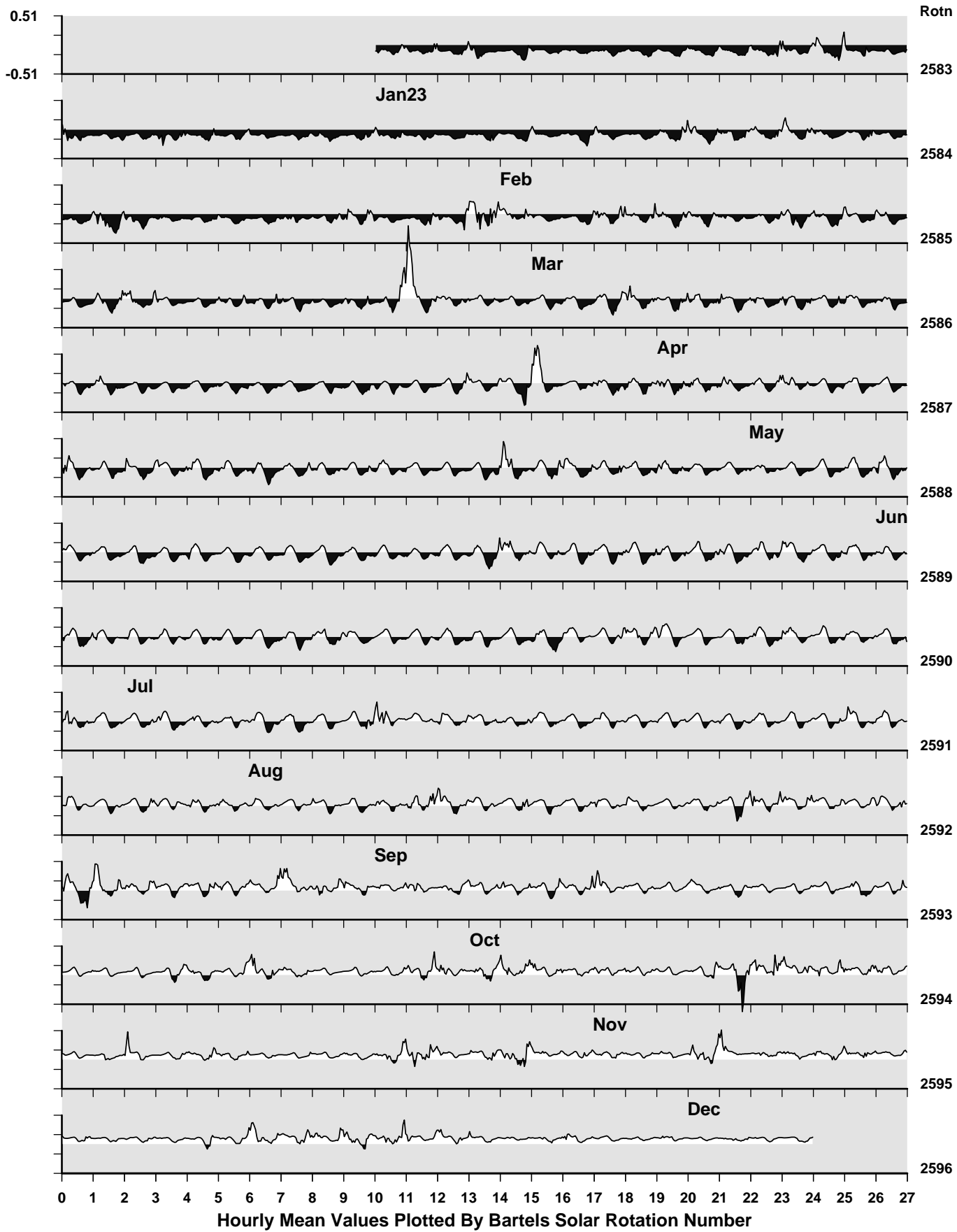
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Lerwick

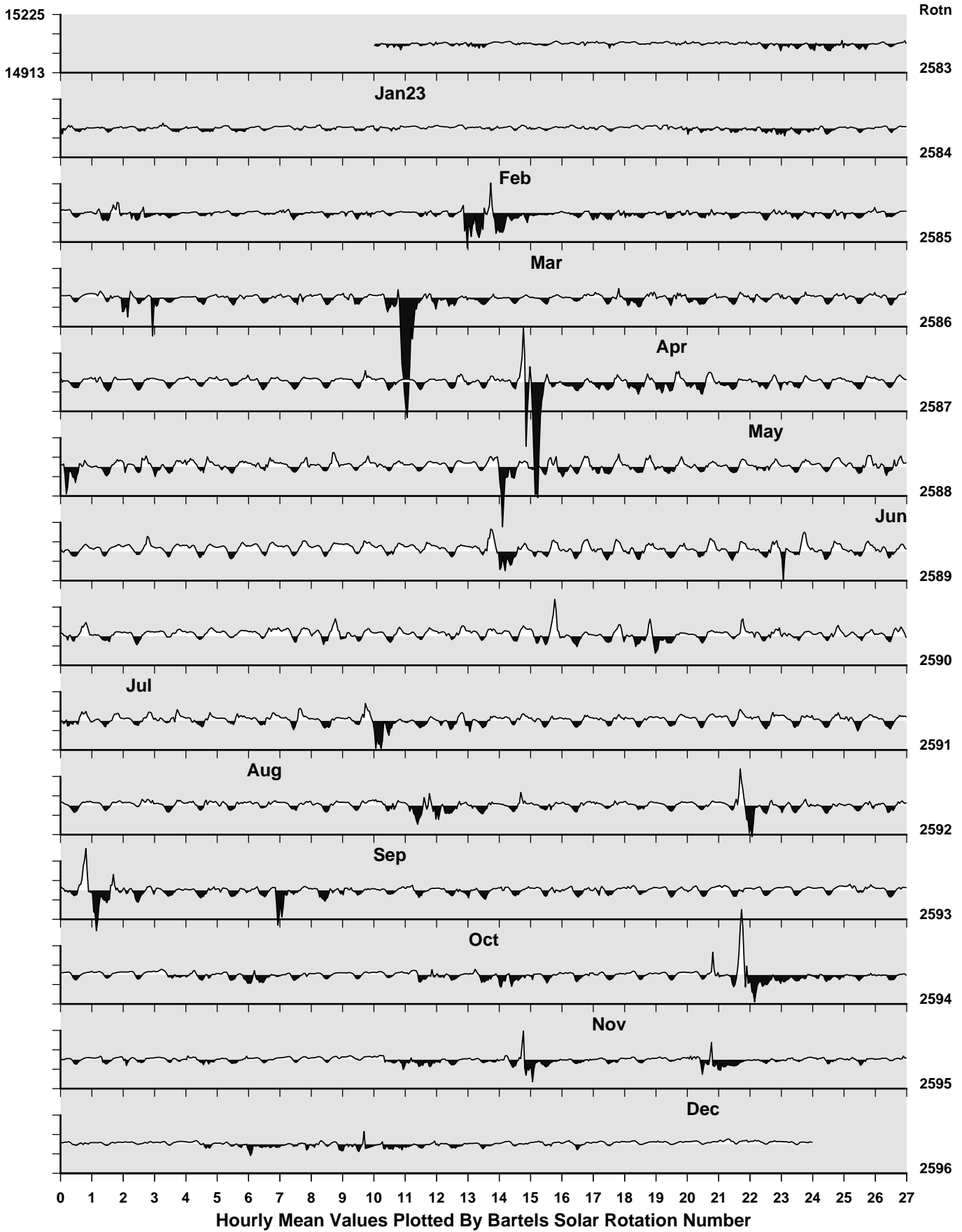
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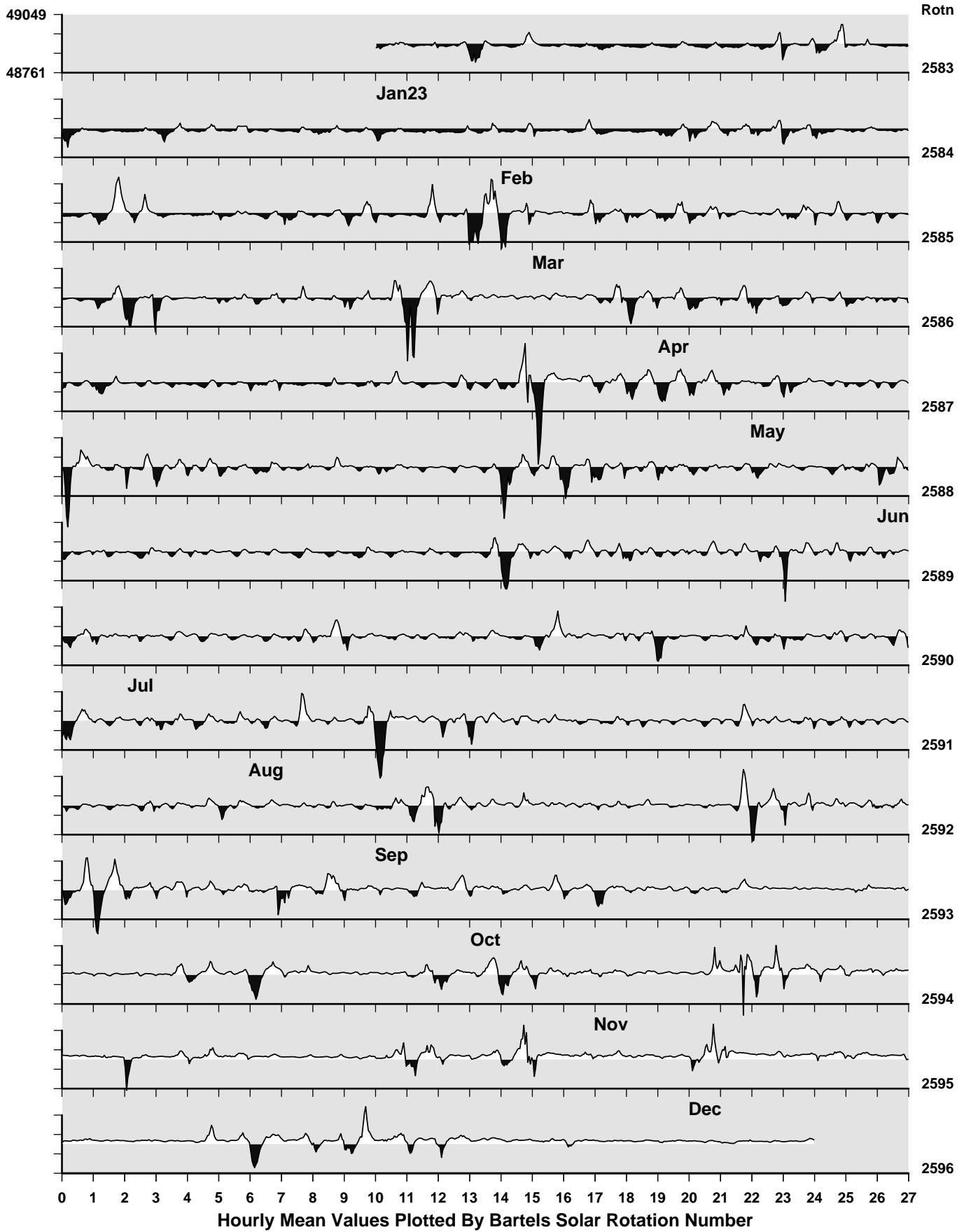
Lerwick Observatory: Declination (degrees)



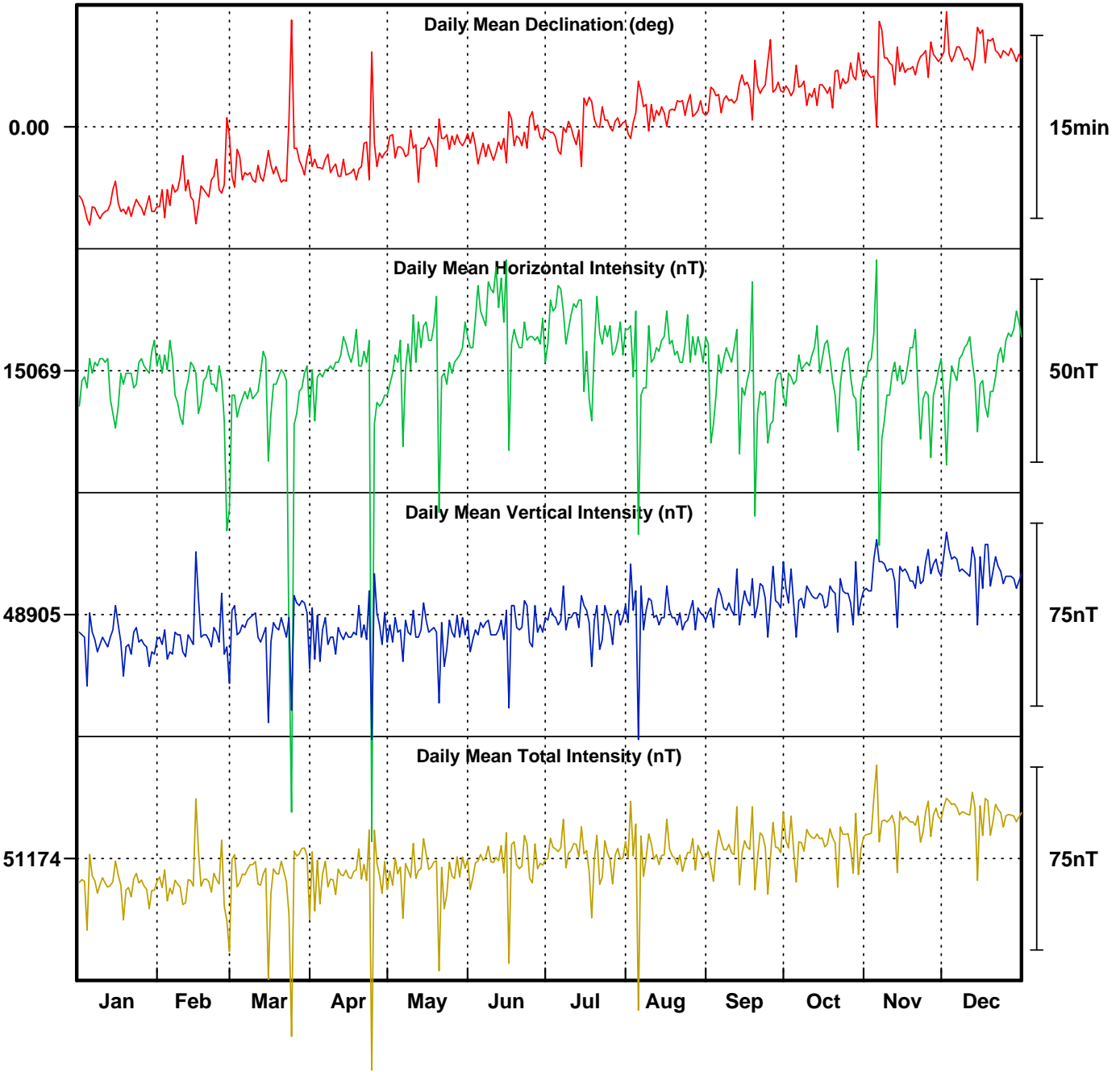
Lerwick Observatory: Horizontal Intensity (nT)



Lerwick Observatory: Vertical Intensity (nT)



Lerwick Observatory 2023



Monthly mean values for Lerwick Observatory 2023

Month	<i>D</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>F</i>
January	-0° 6.4′	15067 nT	72° 52.4′	15067 nT	-28 nT	48894 nT	51163 nT
February	-0° 4.6′	15063 nT	72° 52.7′	15063 nT	-20 nT	48896 nT	51164 nT
March	-0° 2.7′	15057 nT	72° 53.1′	15057 nT	-12 nT	48899 nT	51165 nT
April	-0° 2.5′	15064 nT	72° 52.6′	15064 nT	-11 nT	48898 nT	51166 nT
May	-0° 1.2′	15072 nT	72° 52.1′	15072 nT	-5 nT	48898 nT	51168 nT
June	-0° 0.8′	15081 nT	72° 51.6′	15081 nT	-4 nT	48899 nT	51172 nT
July	0° 0.3′	15079 nT	72° 51.8′	15079 nT	1 nT	48903 nT	51176 nT
August	0° 1.6′	15073 nT	72° 52.2′	15073 nT	7 nT	48905 nT	51175 nT
September	0° 3.3′	15064 nT	72° 52.9′	15064 nT	15 nT	48911 nT	51178 nT
October	0° 3.8′	15068 nT	72° 52.7′	15068 nT	16 nT	48912 nT	51180 nT
November	0° 5.4′	15065 nT	72° 53.1′	15065 nT	24 nT	48922 nT	51189 nT
December	0° 6.5′	15069 nT	72° 52.8′	15069 nT	29 nT	48924 nT	51192 nT

Note:

i. The values shown here are provisional.

Lerwick rapid variations

SIIs and SSCs

Date	Time (UT)	Type	Quality	H (nT)	D (min)	Z (nT)
01/12/2023	00:19	SSC*	B	19.2	-3.15	-8.7
01/12/2023	09:24	SSC*	B	-12.3	4.22	-5.1
15/12/2023	11:46	SSC*	B	-8.2/9.2	1.38	-3.6
17/12/2023	07:37	SSC*	B	-24.6	-2.46	-6.5
28/12/2023	23:47	SSC	B	6.5	-1.26	-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

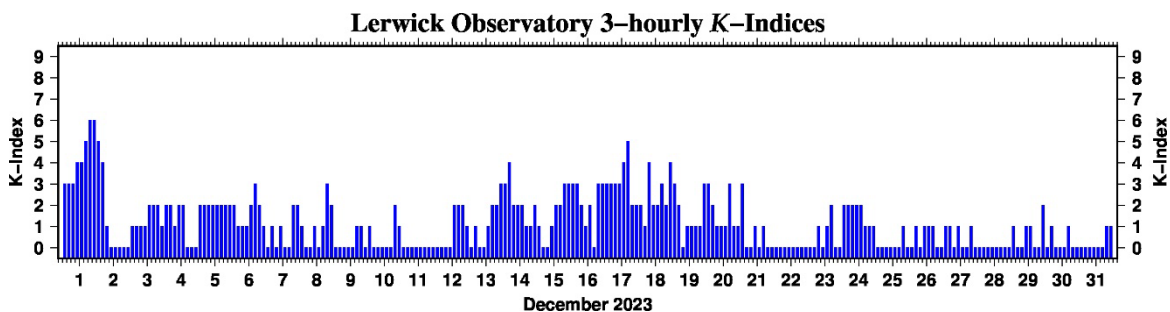
Date	Start	Universal Time Maximum	End	H (nT)	D (min)	Z (nT)
None						

Note:

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

Indices of geomagnetic activity

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



The aa Index

Date	Day	3-hourly aa-indices								Aa_{am}	Aa_{pm}	Aa
01/12/2023	335	59	59	67	171	137	81	102	80	89.2	99.9	94.5
02/12/2023	336	59	24	8	8	12	12	9	16	24.6	12.4	18.5
03/12/2023	337	24	38	24	16	32	46	16	16	25.6	27.5	26.5
04/12/2023	338	12	24	38	24	16	12	12	12	24.5	13	18.8
05/12/2023	339	32	46	32	32	32	32	16	16	35.5	24.1	29.8
06/12/2023	340	24	16	16	24	32	24	12	16	20.1	21	20.6
07/12/2023	341	8	5	8	8	12	8	12	20	7.1	12.9	10
08/12/2023	342	5	5	9	8	8	12	20	12	6.9	12.9	9.9
09/12/2023	343	2	5	8	2	8	8	5	2	4.5	5.8	5.1
10/12/2023	344	5	9	5	2	8	8	9	5	5.5	7.5	6.5
11/12/2023	345	5	5	2	2	8	8	2	2	3.8	5.1	4.5
12/12/2023	346	2	12	12	8	32	32	45	16	8.6	31.4	20
13/12/2023	347	8	16	12	12	8	32	24	32	12	24	18
14/12/2023	348	24	37	24	38	24	12	12	24	30.8	18.1	24.4
15/12/2023	349	9	5	5	38	46	24	45	32	14.3	36.9	25.6
16/12/2023	350	24	46	32	16	24	8	37	24	29.5	23.3	26.4
17/12/2023	351	20	59	67	59	102	102	16	46	51.3	66.3	58.8
18/12/2023	352	20	67	116	46	46	32	46	80	62.3	50.9	56.6
19/12/2023	353	32	32	24	16	8	12	16	24	26.1	15	20.5
20/12/2023	354	45	16	16	12	16	24	8	8	22.4	13.9	18.2
21/12/2023	355	20	5	5	24	5	8	5	2	13.6	5.1	9.4
22/12/2023	356	5	8	8	5	5	8	5	8	6.5	6.5	6.5
23/12/2023	357	5	5	24	8	16	24	5	12	10.6	14.3	12.5
24/12/2023	358	20	12	16	32	16	8	16	8	20	11.9	16
25/12/2023	359	8	8	12	2	2	8	8	5	7.5	5.8	6.7
26/12/2023	360	5	12	12	12	12	8	8	9	10.3	9.2	9.8
27/12/2023	361	16	12	8	12	8	5	5	8	11.9	6.5	9.2
28/12/2023	362	2	2	2	8	5	5	2	16	3.8	7.2	5.5
29/12/2023	363	8	12	20	12	16	9	8	16	13	12.3	12.7
30/12/2023	364	8	24	12	8	12	8	8	2	13	7.5	10.2
31/12/2023	365	2	8	5	2	5	8	8	12	4.5	8.2	6.3
Monthly Mean Value											19.9	

Notes

- i. The units of the aa index are nT.
- ii. The 3-hour aa values are rounded to the nearest integer. Where $aa = *.5$, aa is rounded down.
- iii. Daily values (Aa_{am} , Aa_{pm} and Aa) are computed from aa values of original resolution.
- iv. The monthly mean value is computed from the daily mean values, Aa .
- v. Definitive aa indices are derived and published by the International Service for Geomagnetic Indices.

