

BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

# Lerwick Observatory

## Monthly Magnetic Bulletin

May 2006

06/05/LE



SHETLAND  
ISLANDS



British  
Geological Survey

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

# 1. LERWICK OBSERVATORY MAGNETIC DATA

## 1.1 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:

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Scotland, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 131 667 1000  
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E-mail: orba@bgs.ac.uk  
Internet: [www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.geomag.bgs.ac.uk)

## 1.2 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:* 62°0.3'N 88°3.1'E  
*Height above mean sea level:* 85 m

The geomagnetic co-ordinates are calculated using the 10th generation International Geomagnetic Reference Field at epoch 2006.5.

## 1.3 The Observatory Operation

### 1.3.1 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 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.

### 1.3.2 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.

## 1.4 Data Presentation

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

### 1.4.1 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.

### 1.4.2 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.

### 1.4.3 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.

### 1.4.4 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.

### 1.4.5 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.

### 1.4.6 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. 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.

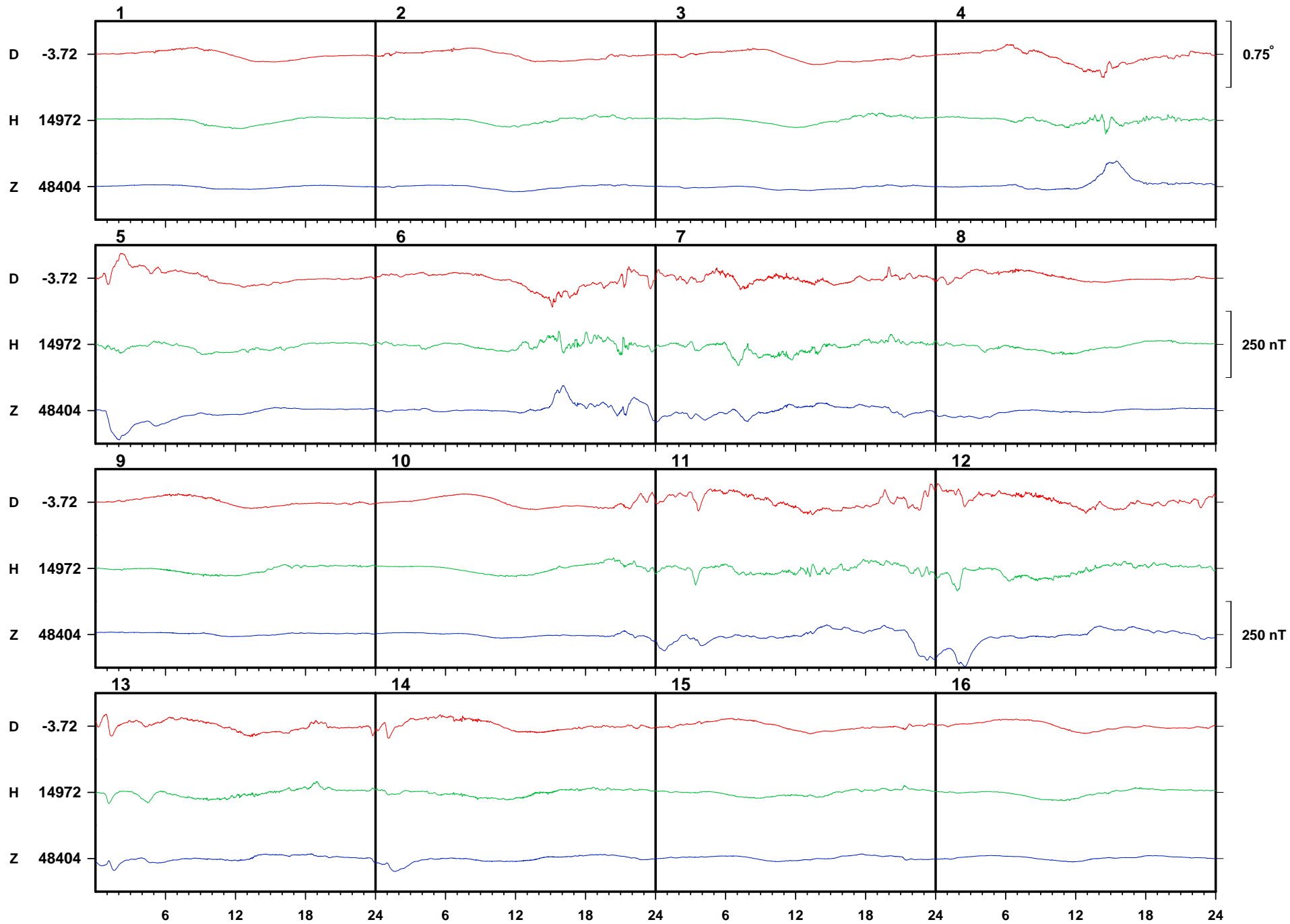
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Licence Number: 100017897/2006**

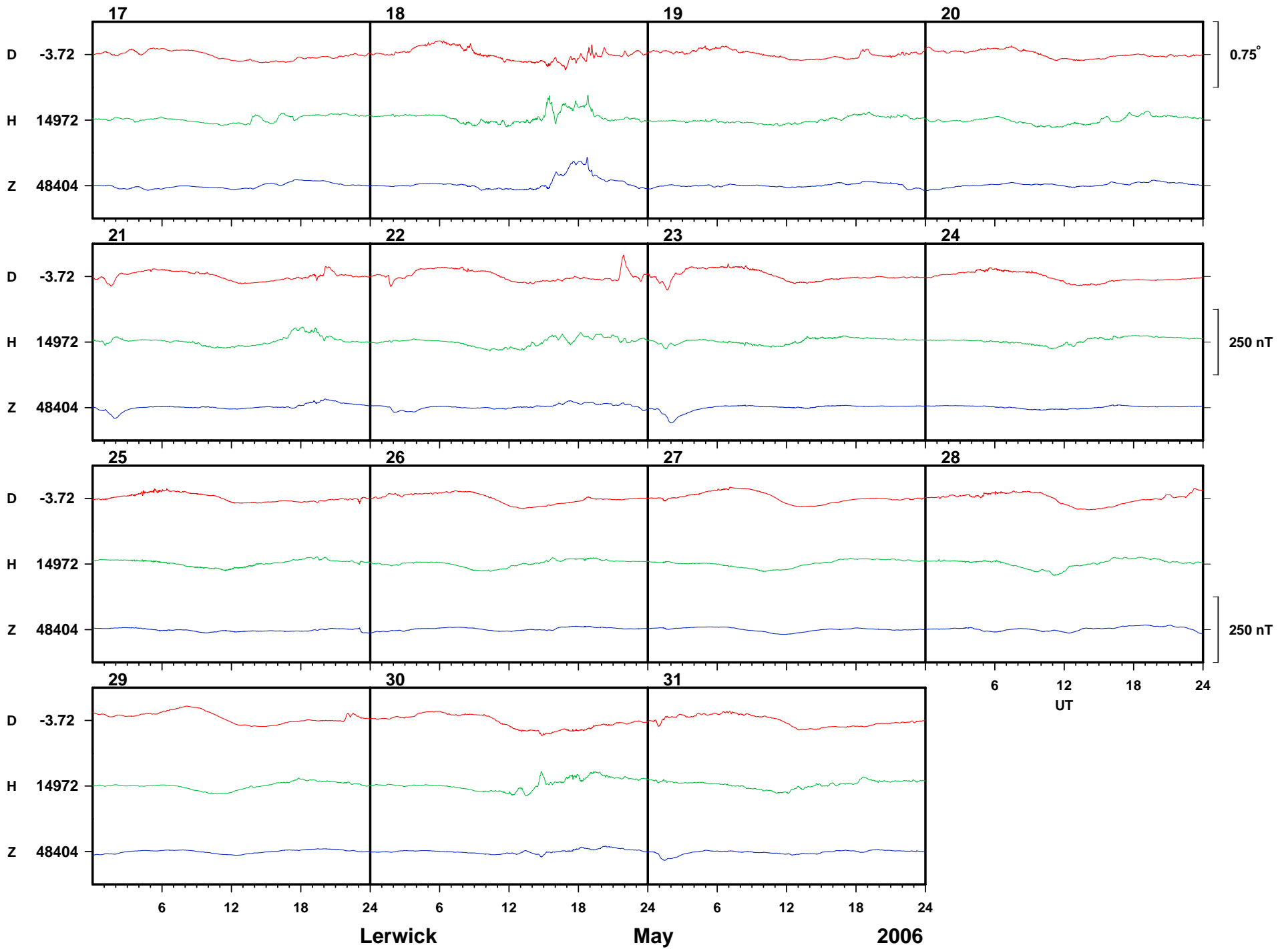
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Lerwick

May

2006

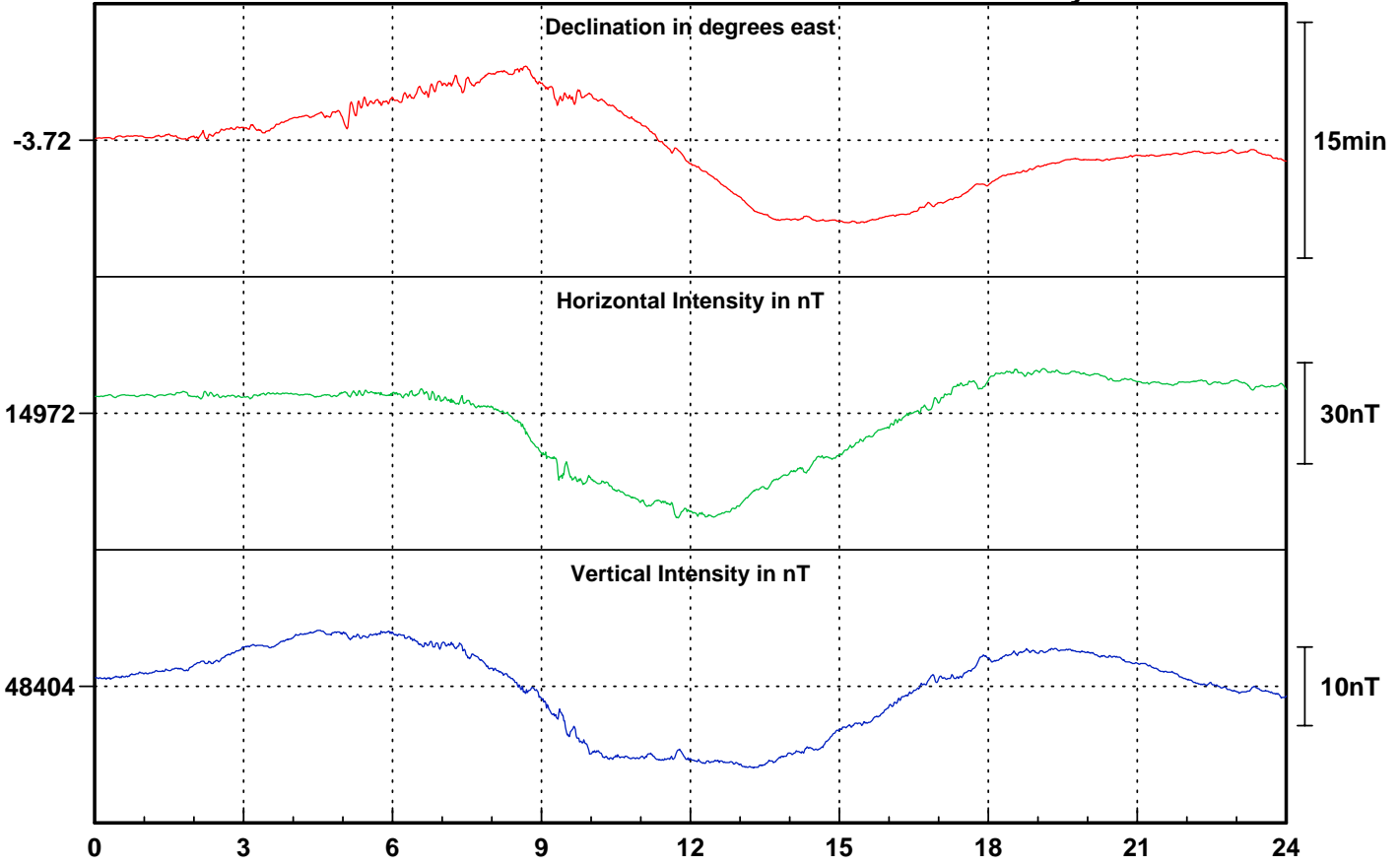




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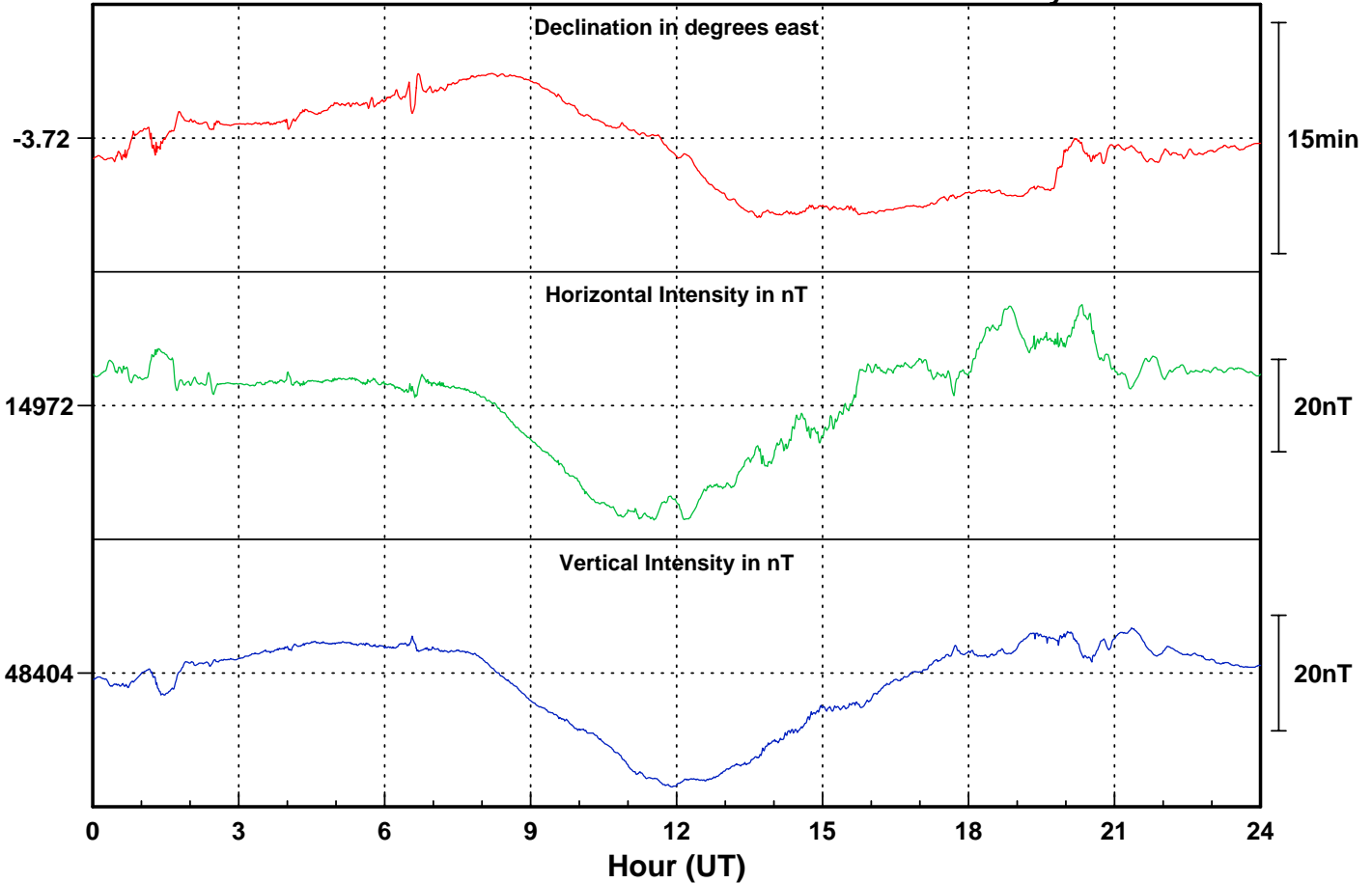
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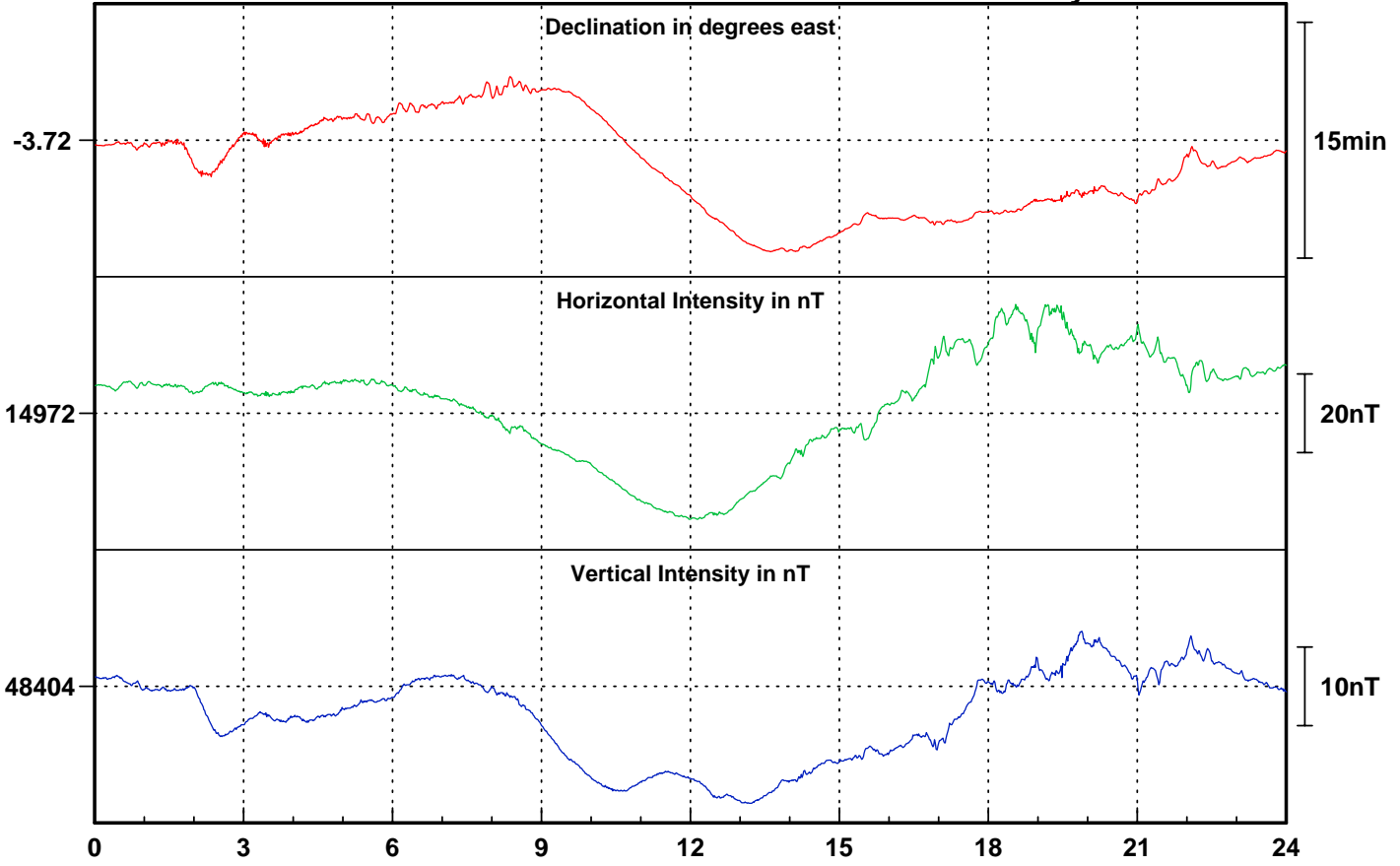
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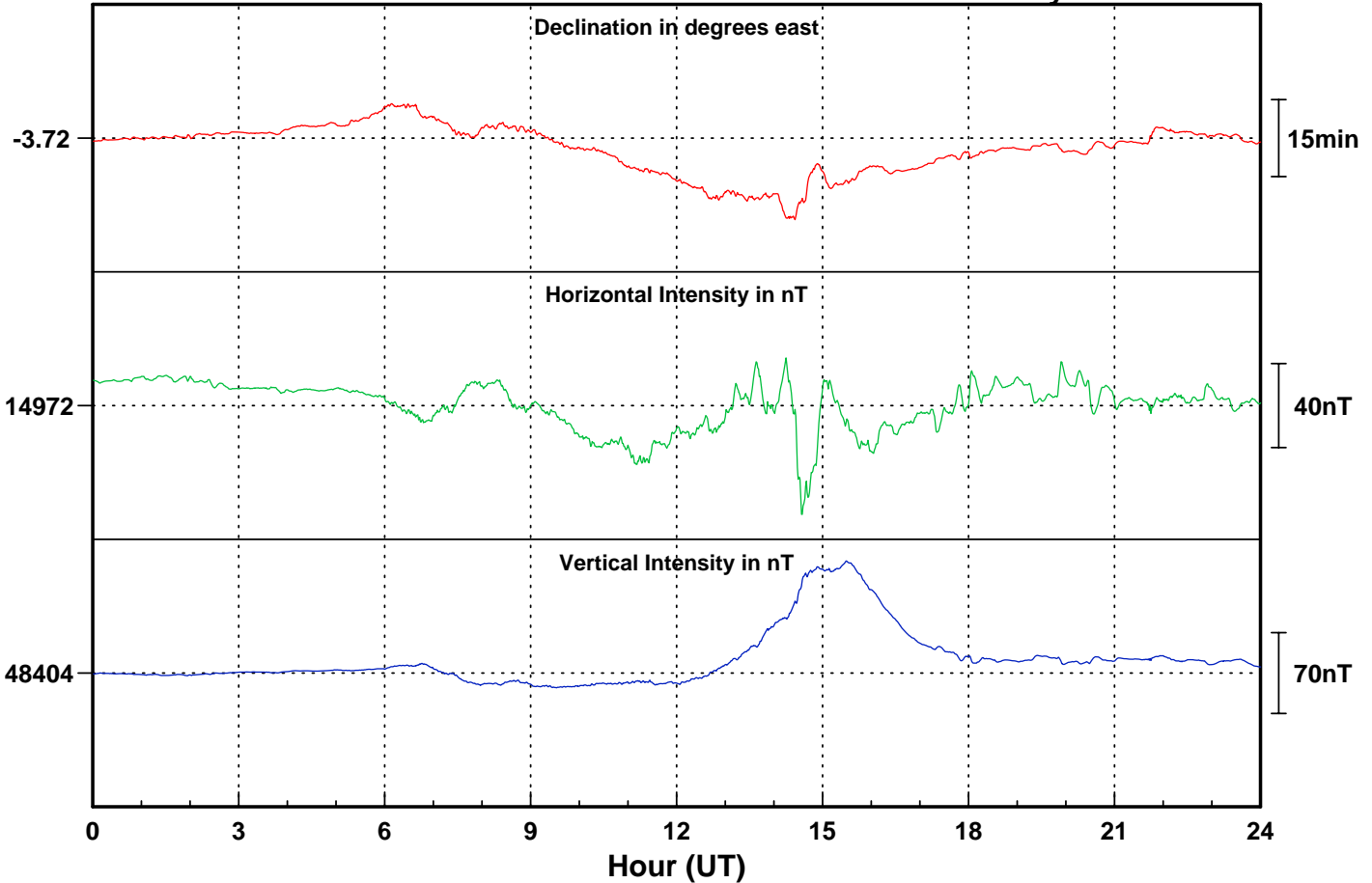
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Day number: 123



Date: 04-05-2006

Day number: 124

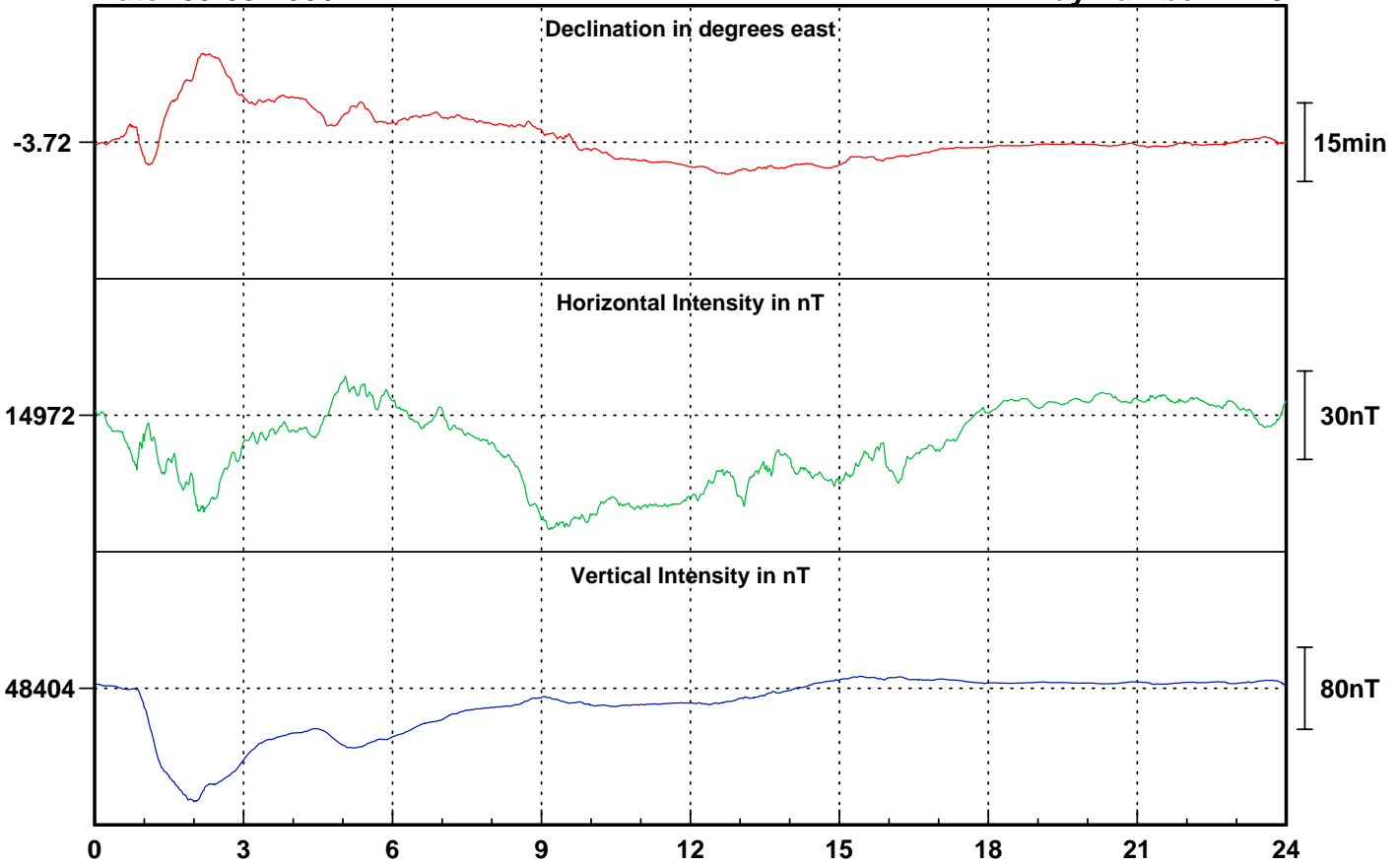




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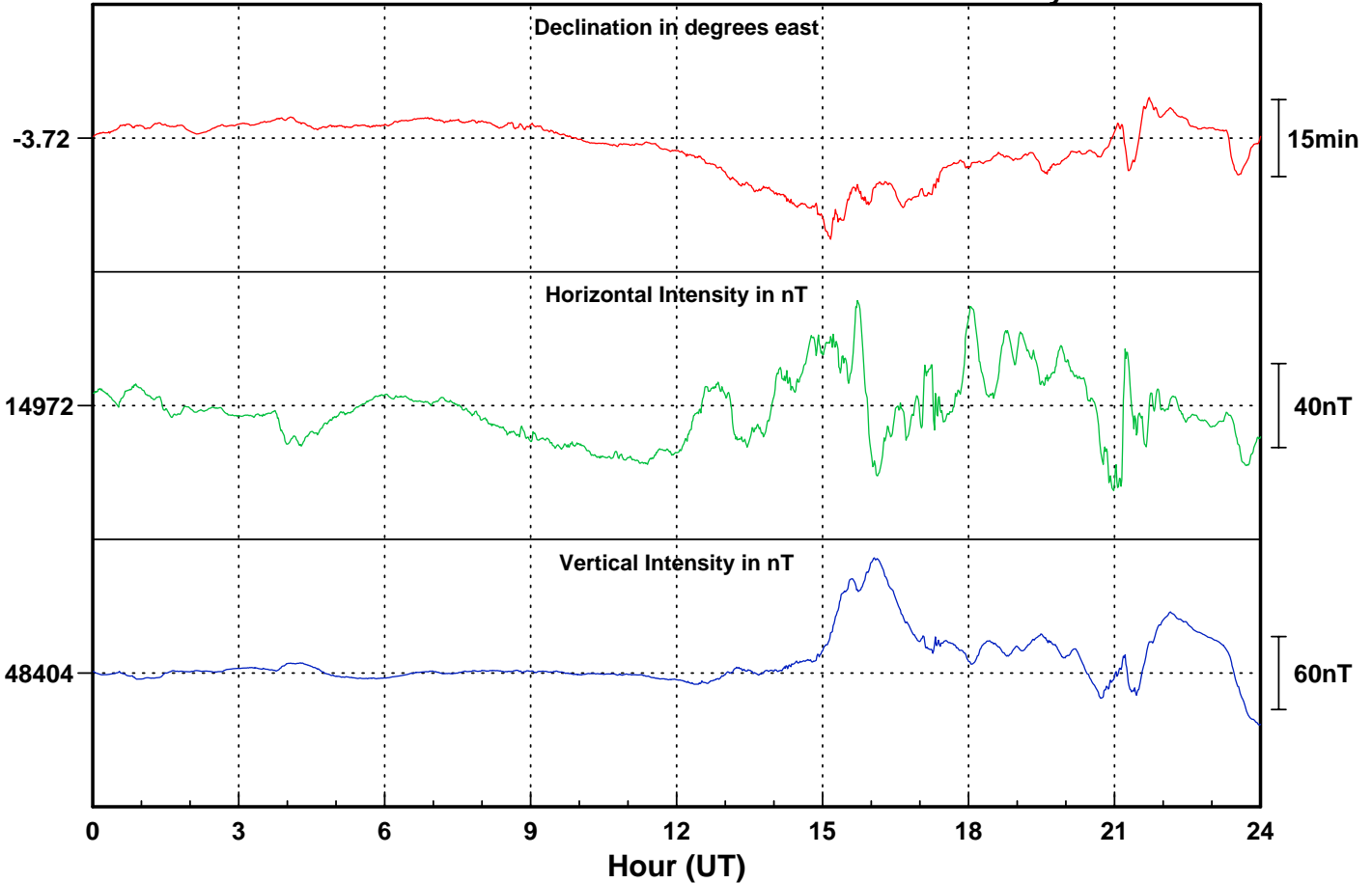
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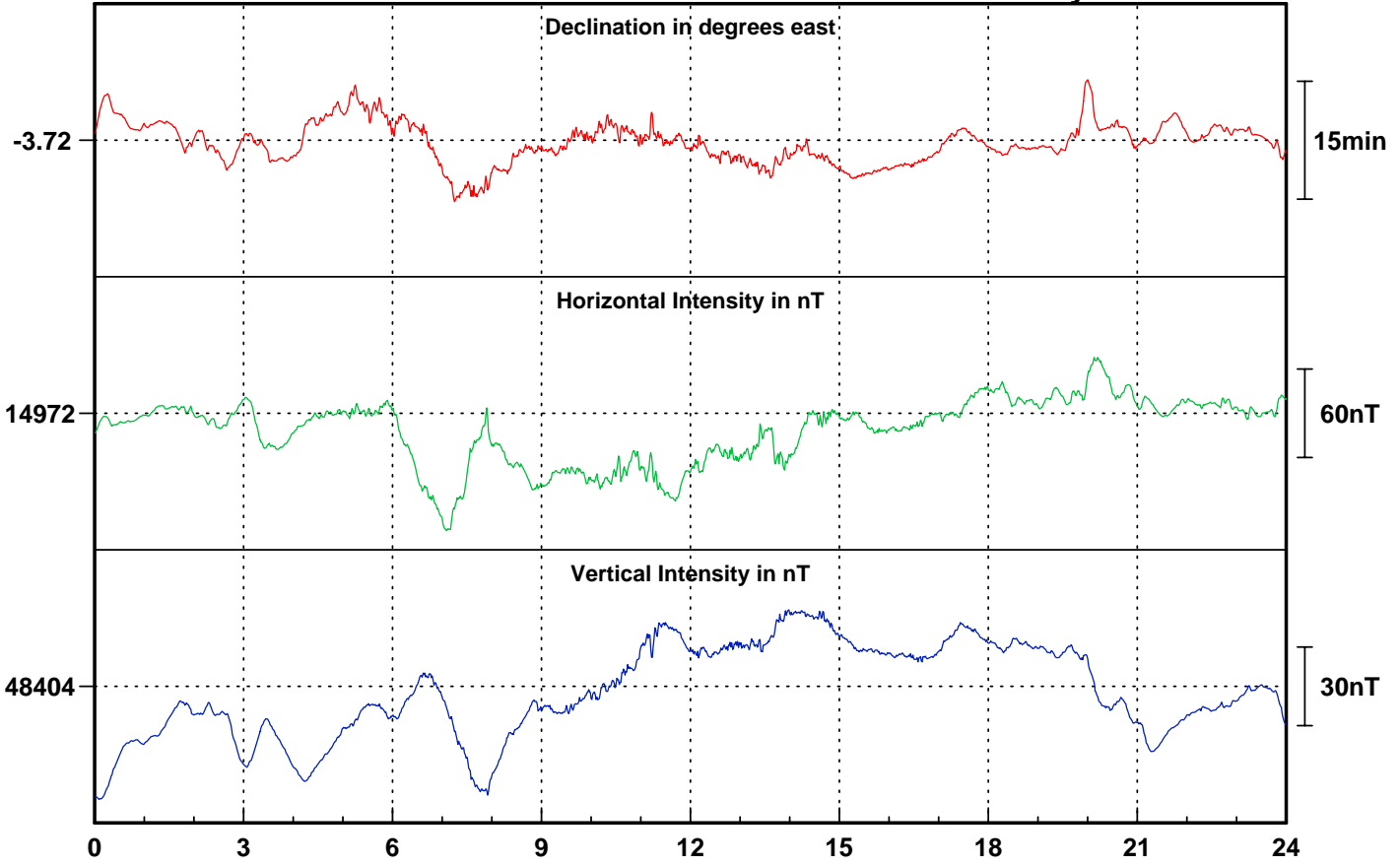
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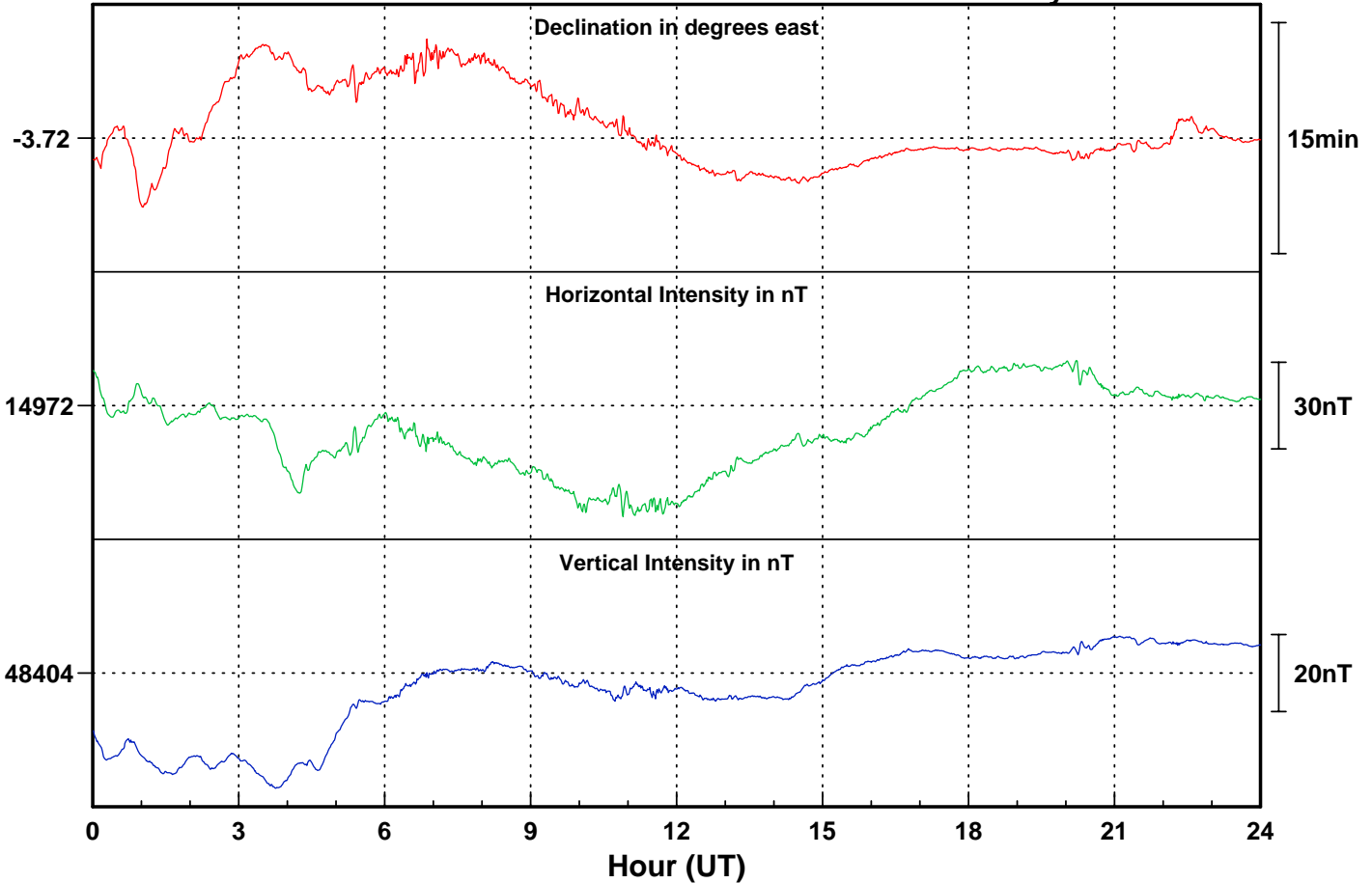
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Day number: 127



Date: 08-05-2006

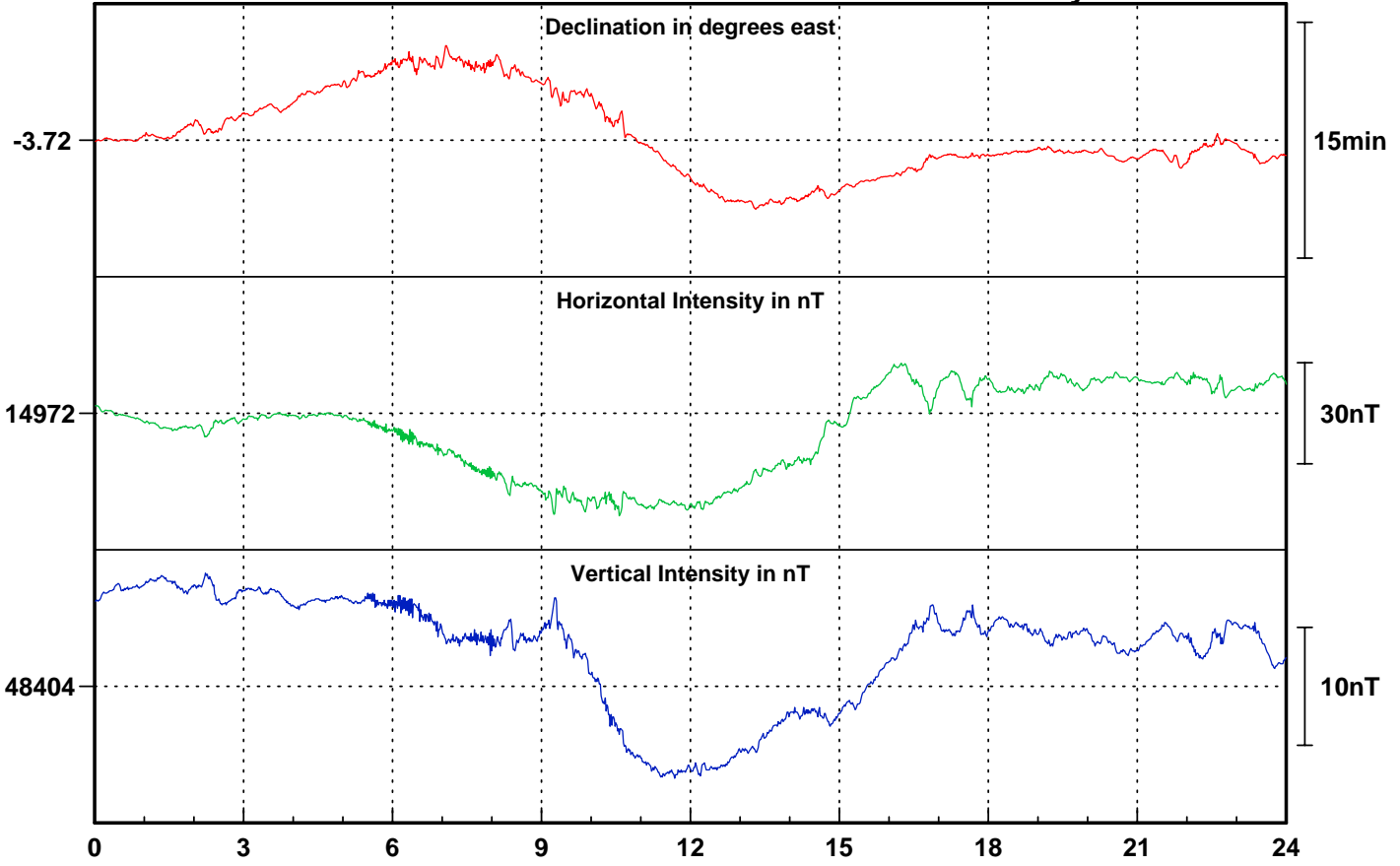
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Date: 09-05-2006

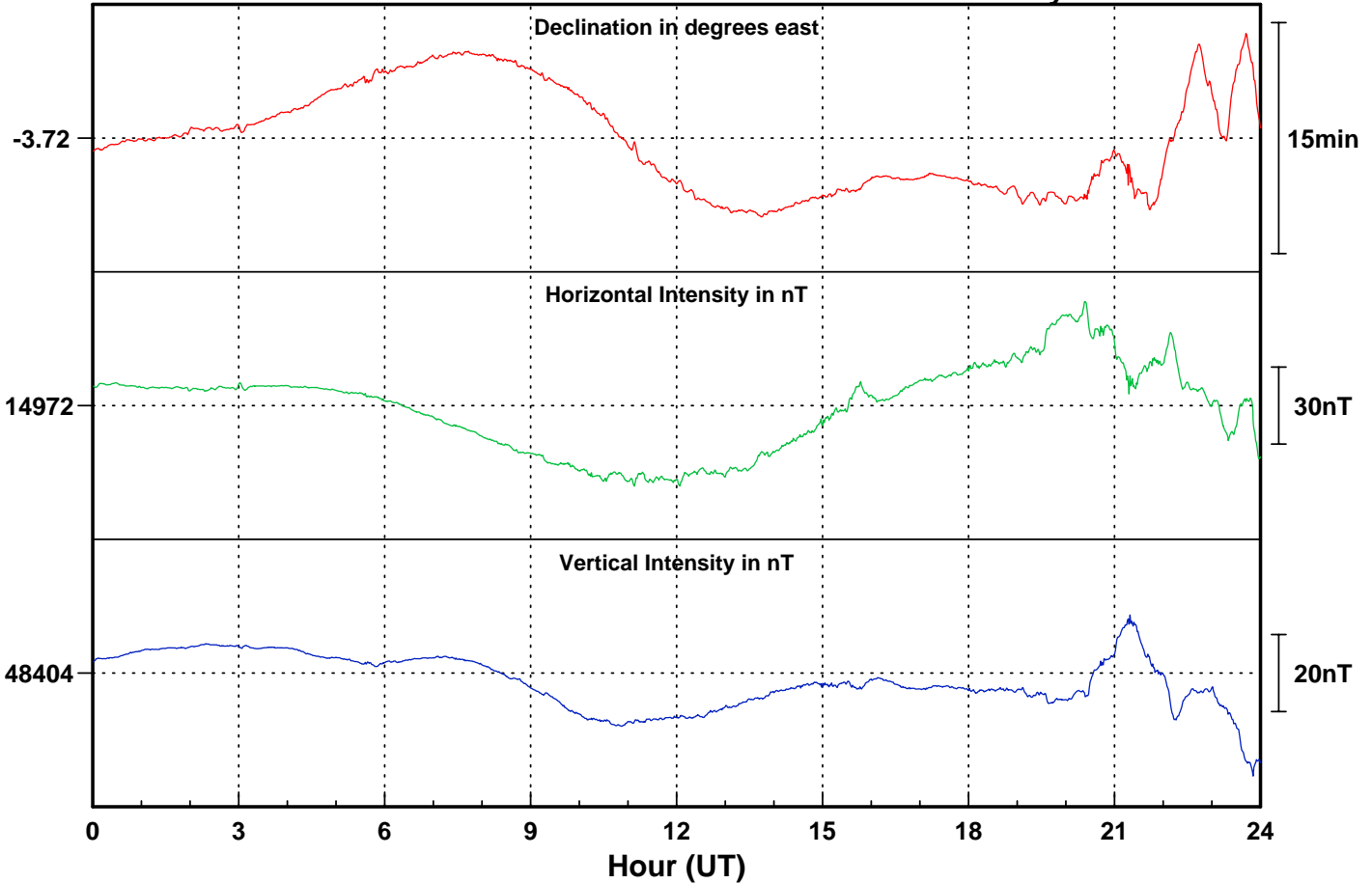
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Day number: 129



Date: 10-05-2006

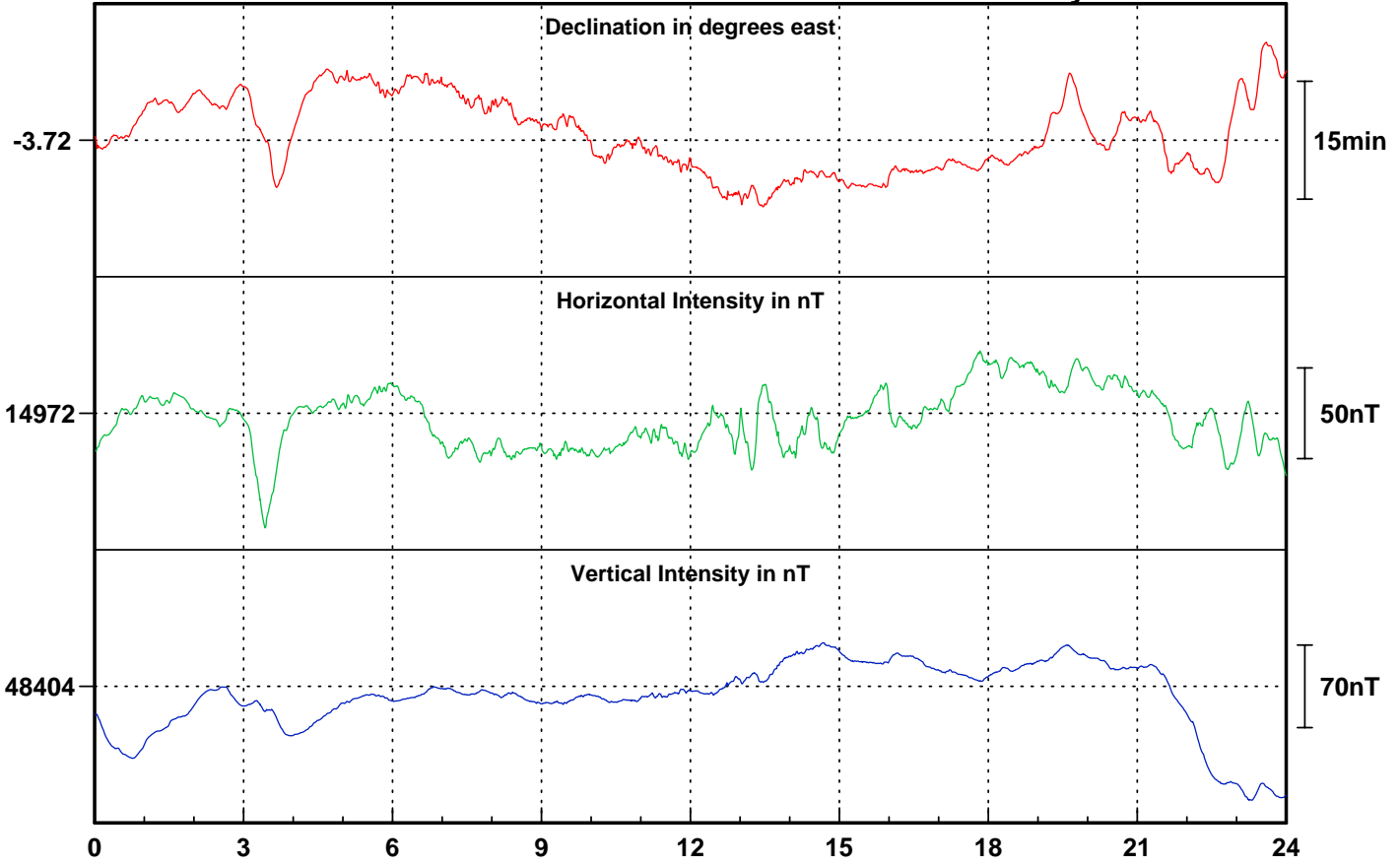
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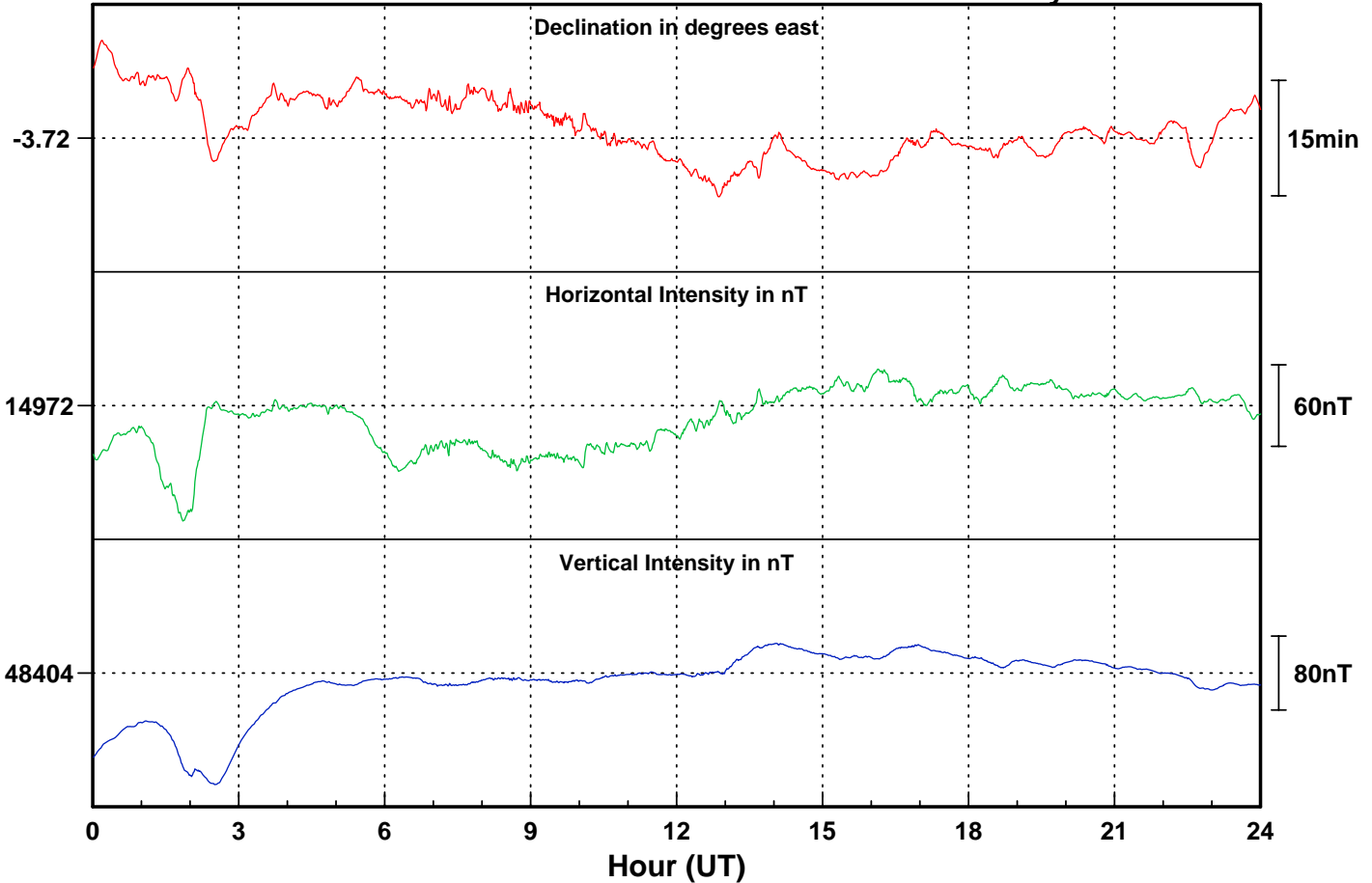
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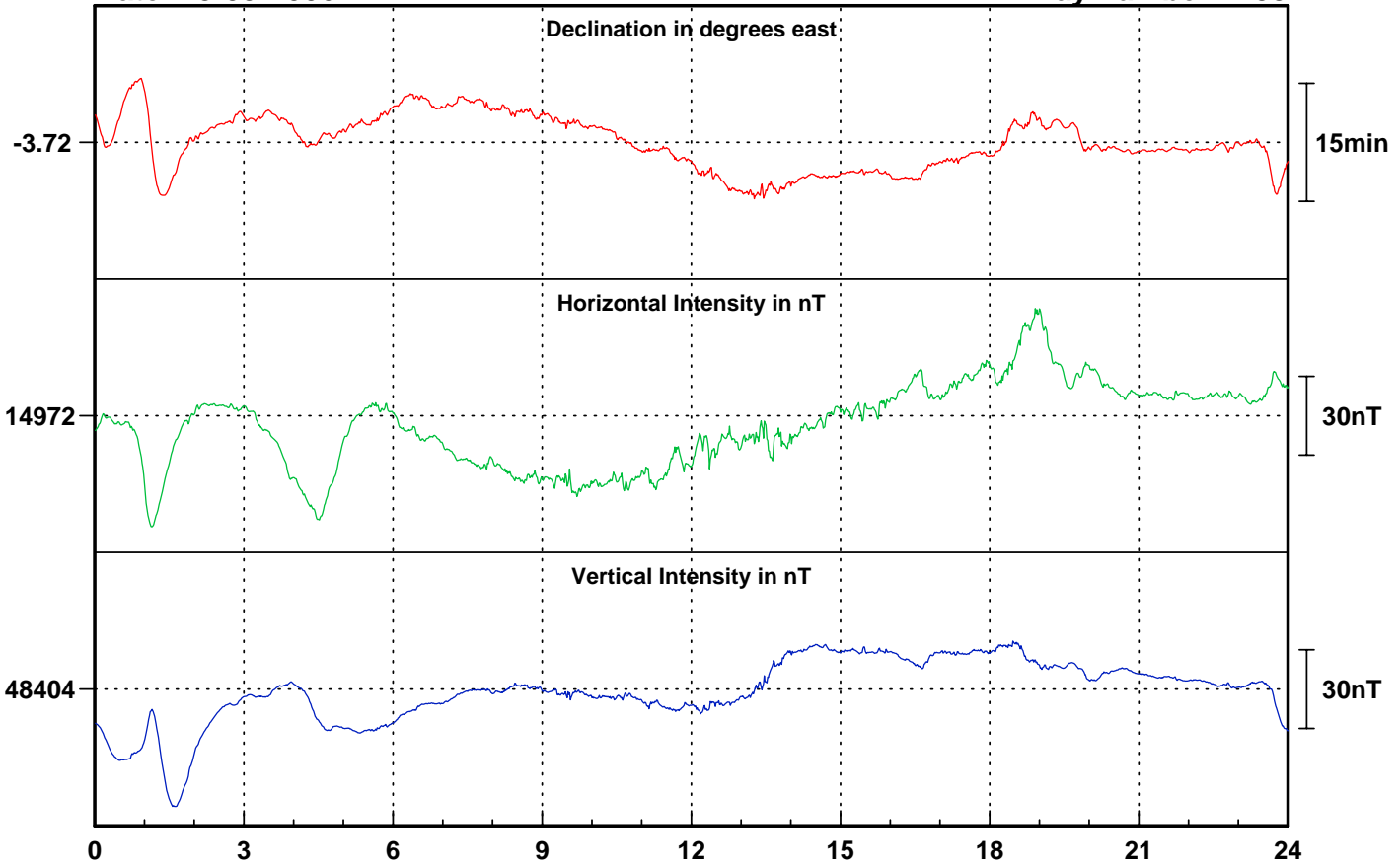
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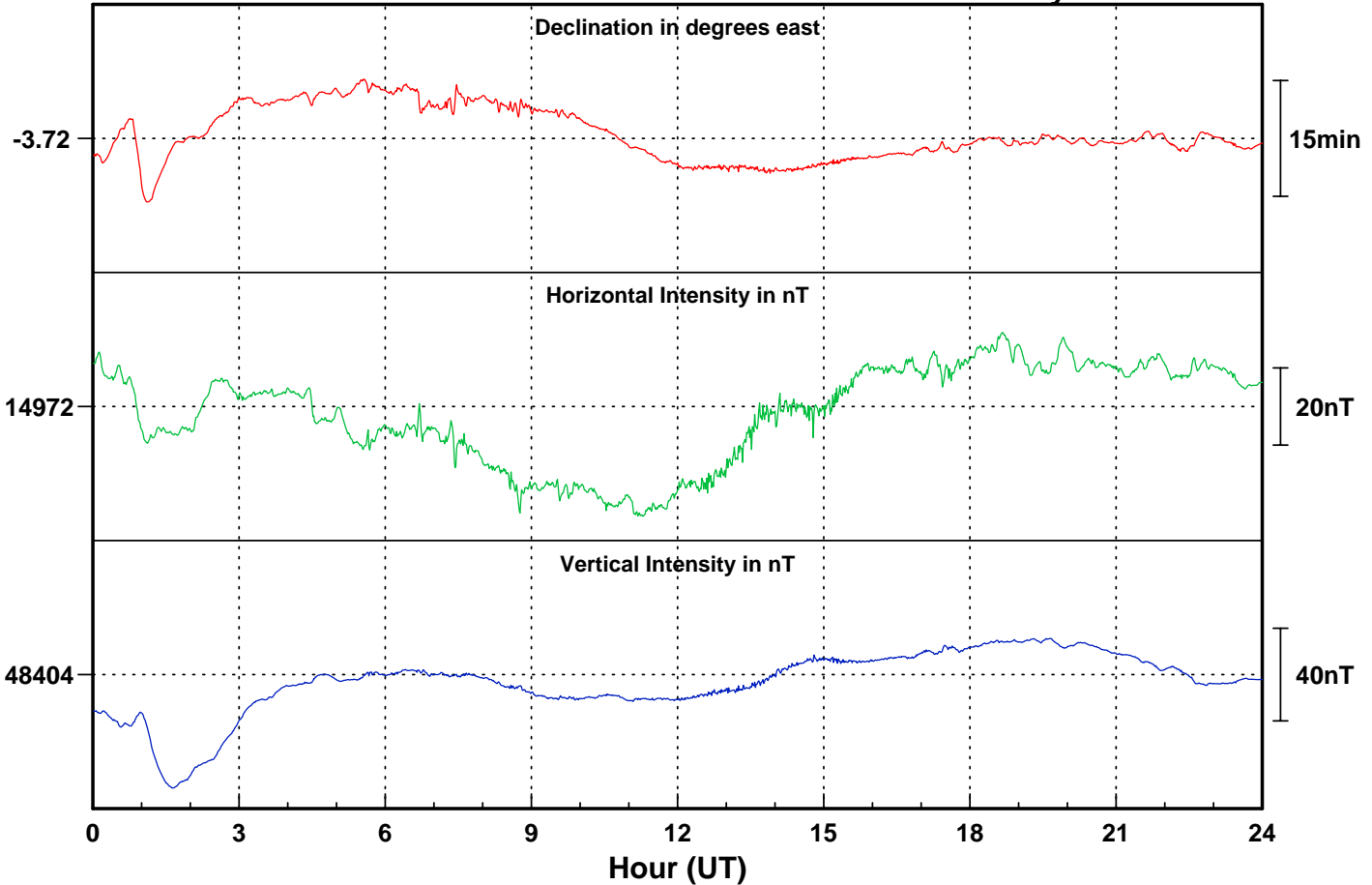
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Day number: 133



Date: 14-05-2006

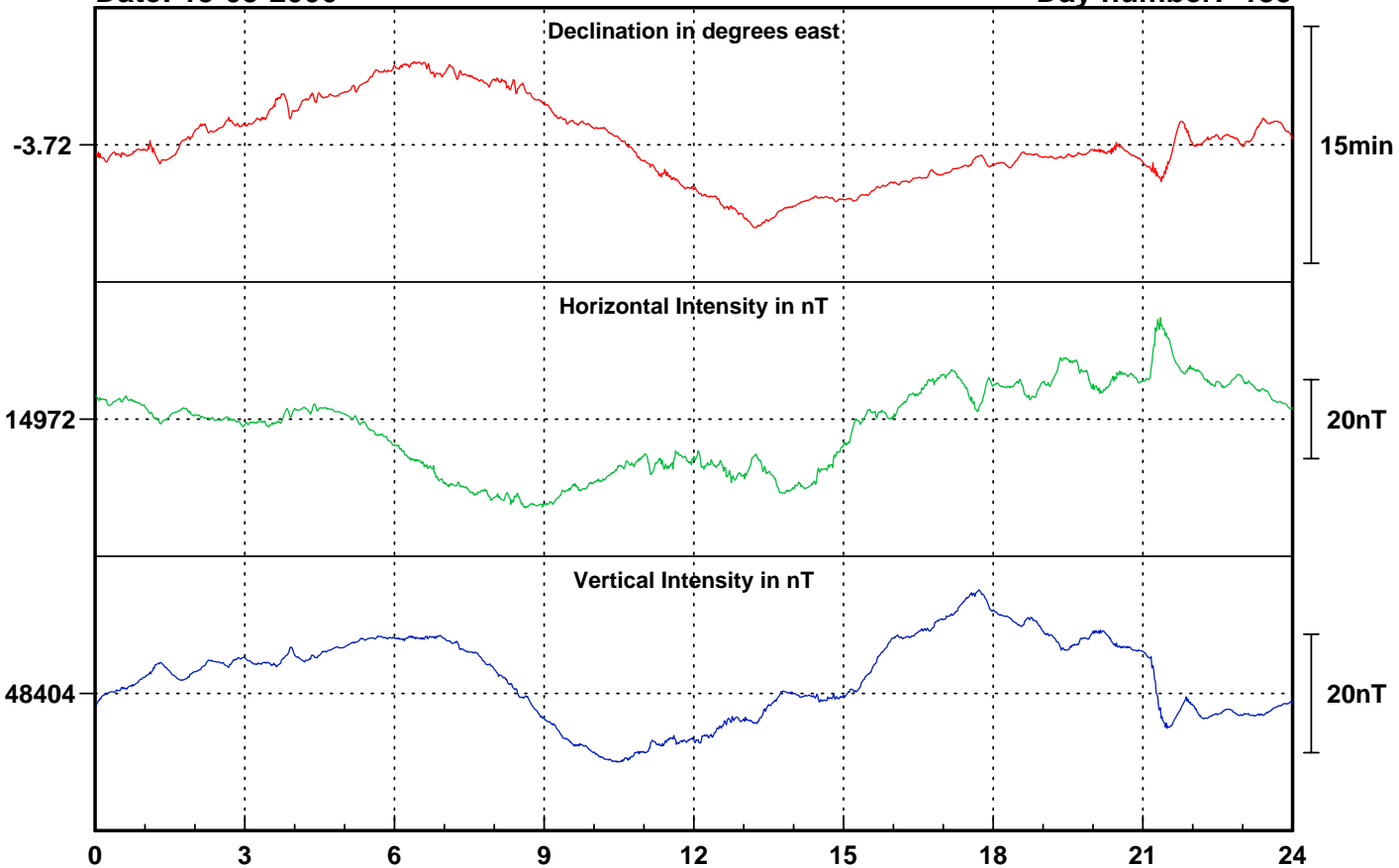
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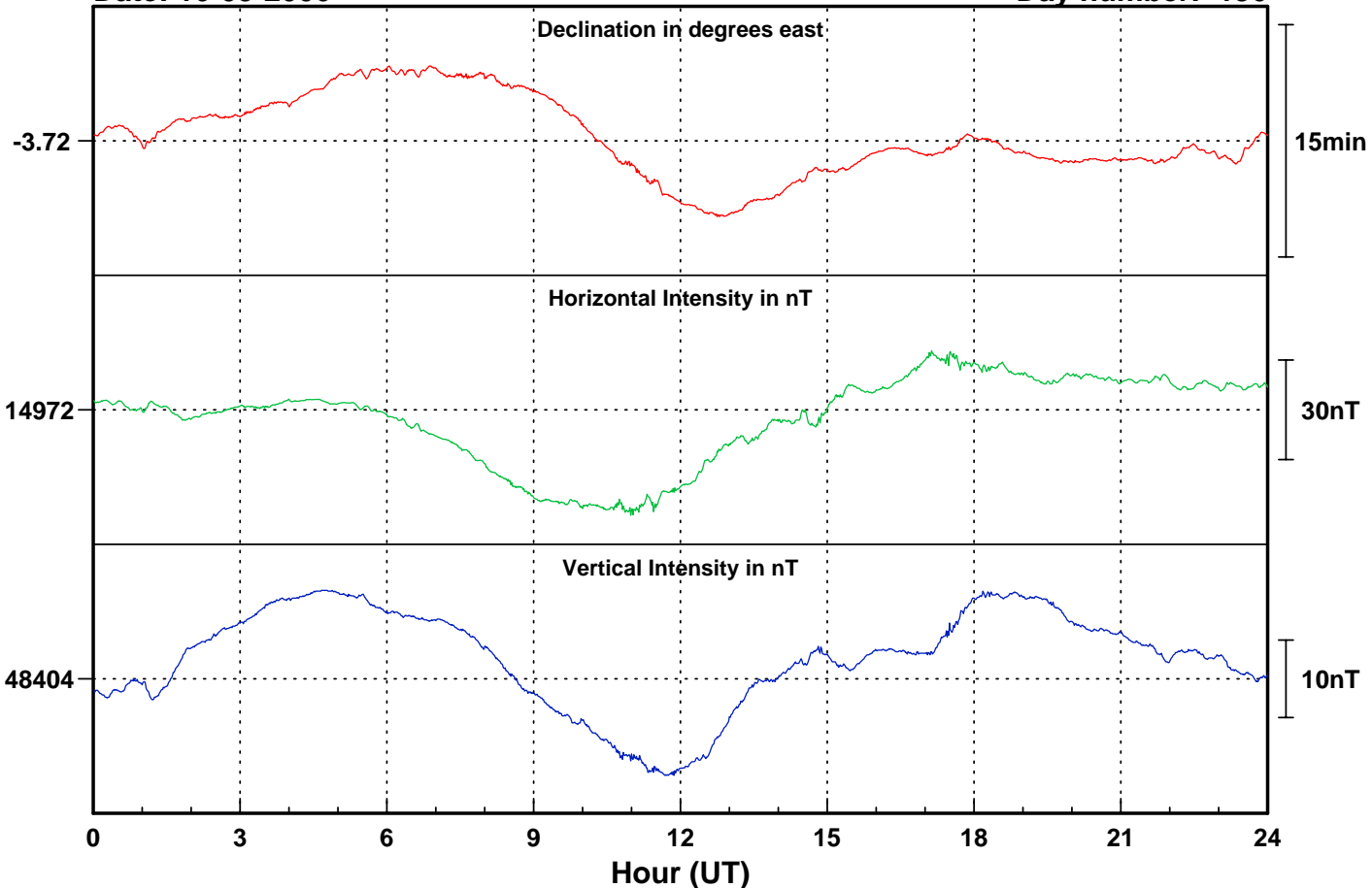
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Day number: 135



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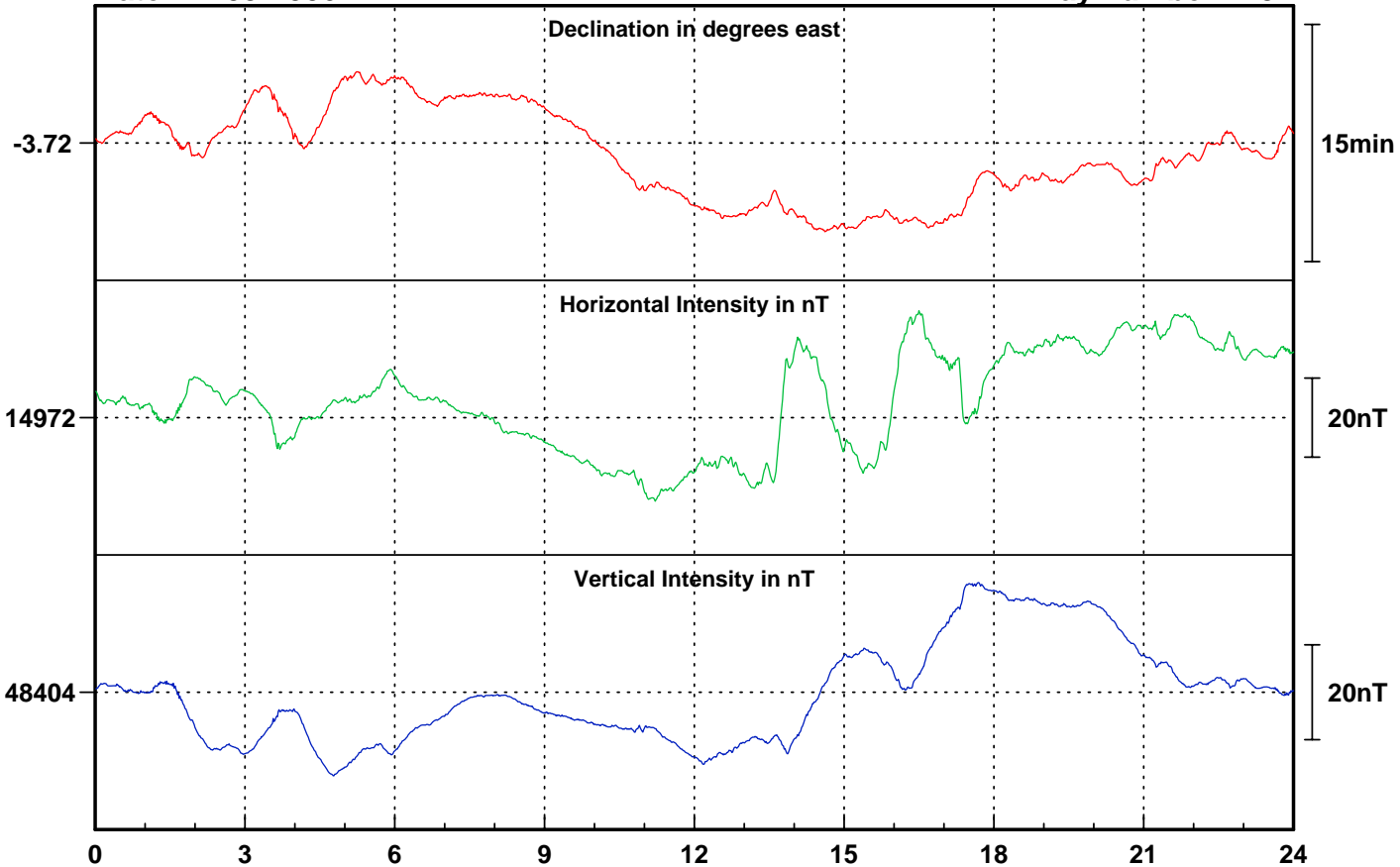
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Date: 17-05-2006

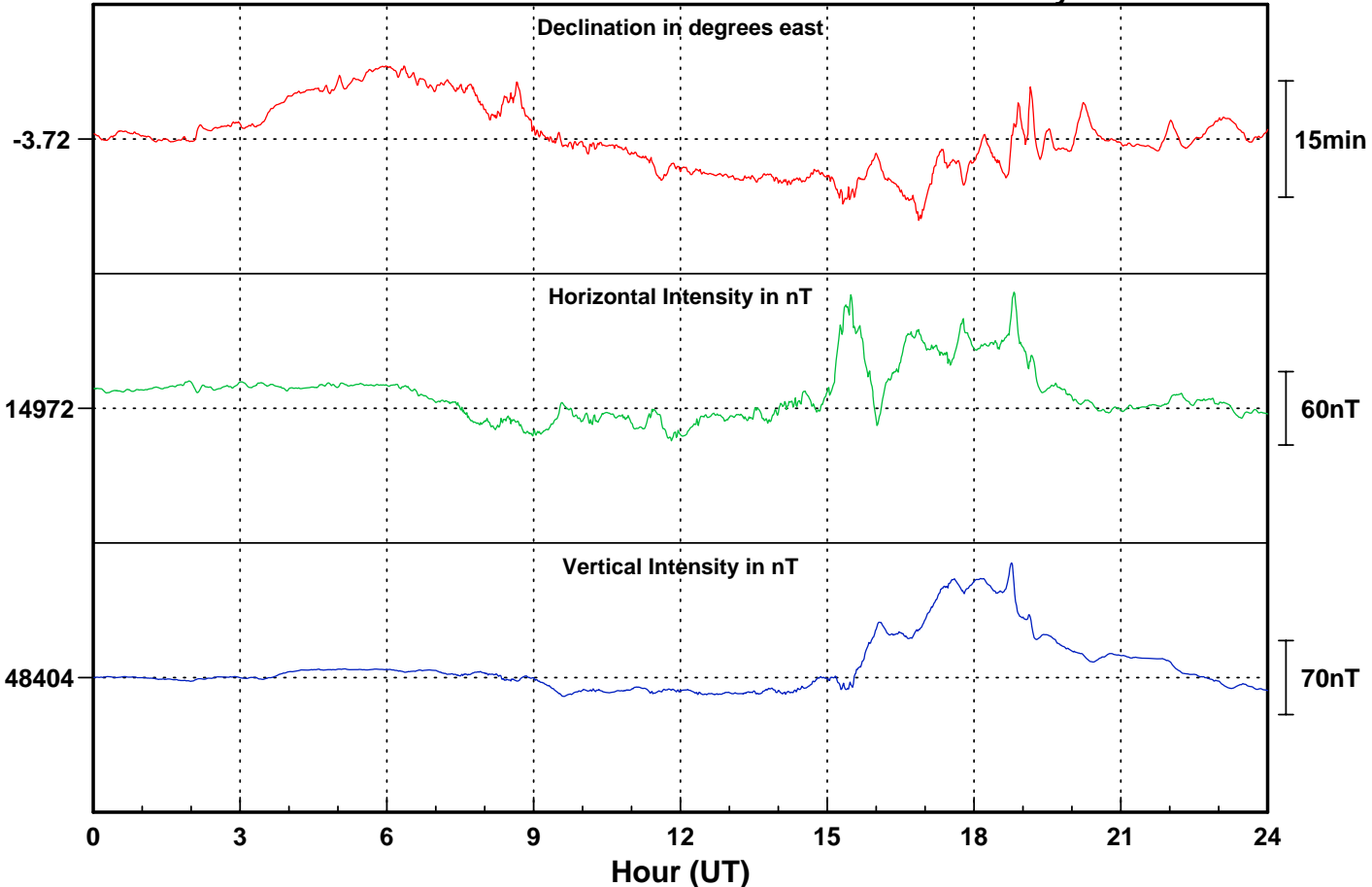
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Day number: 137



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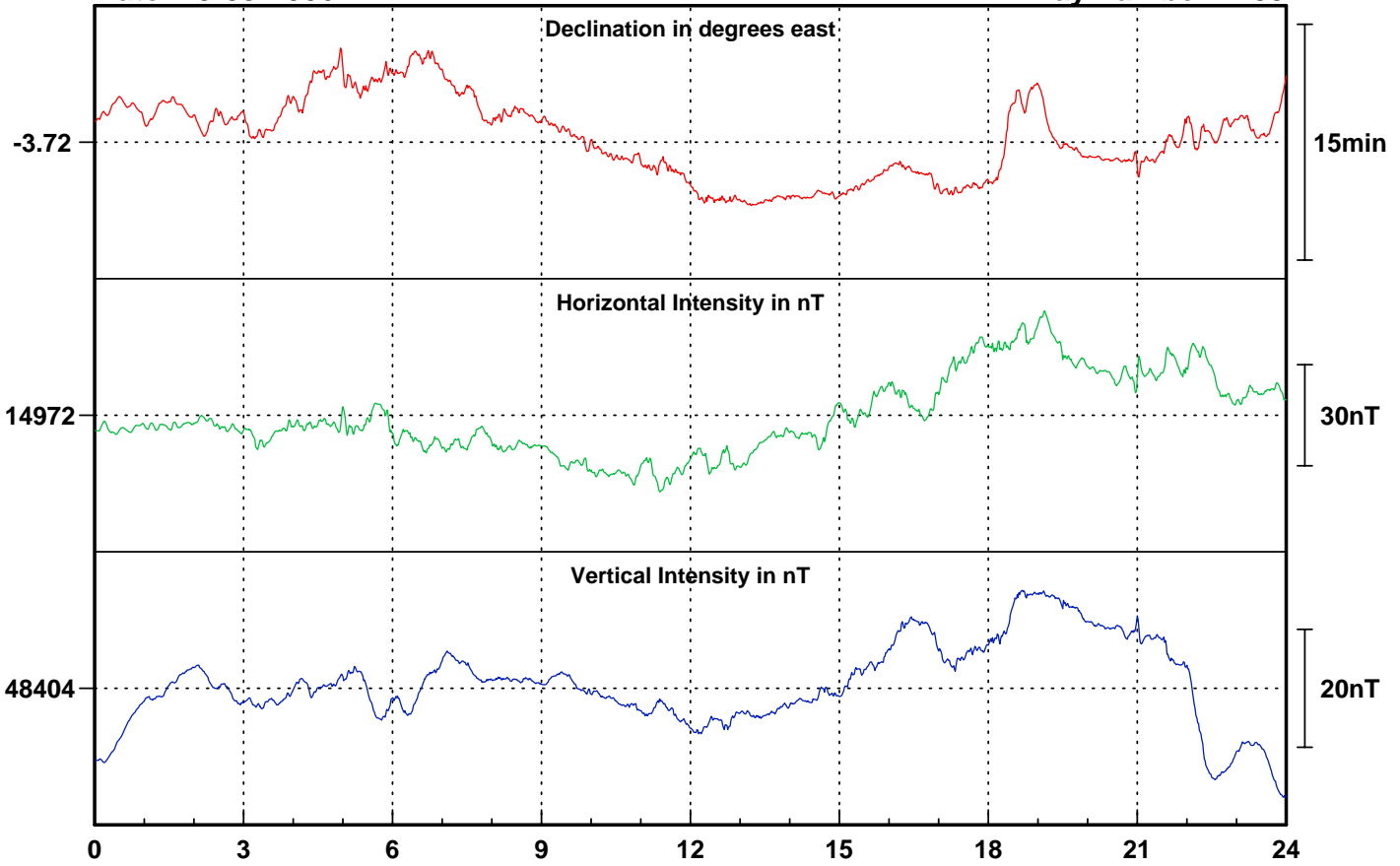
Day number: 138



Date: 19-05-2006

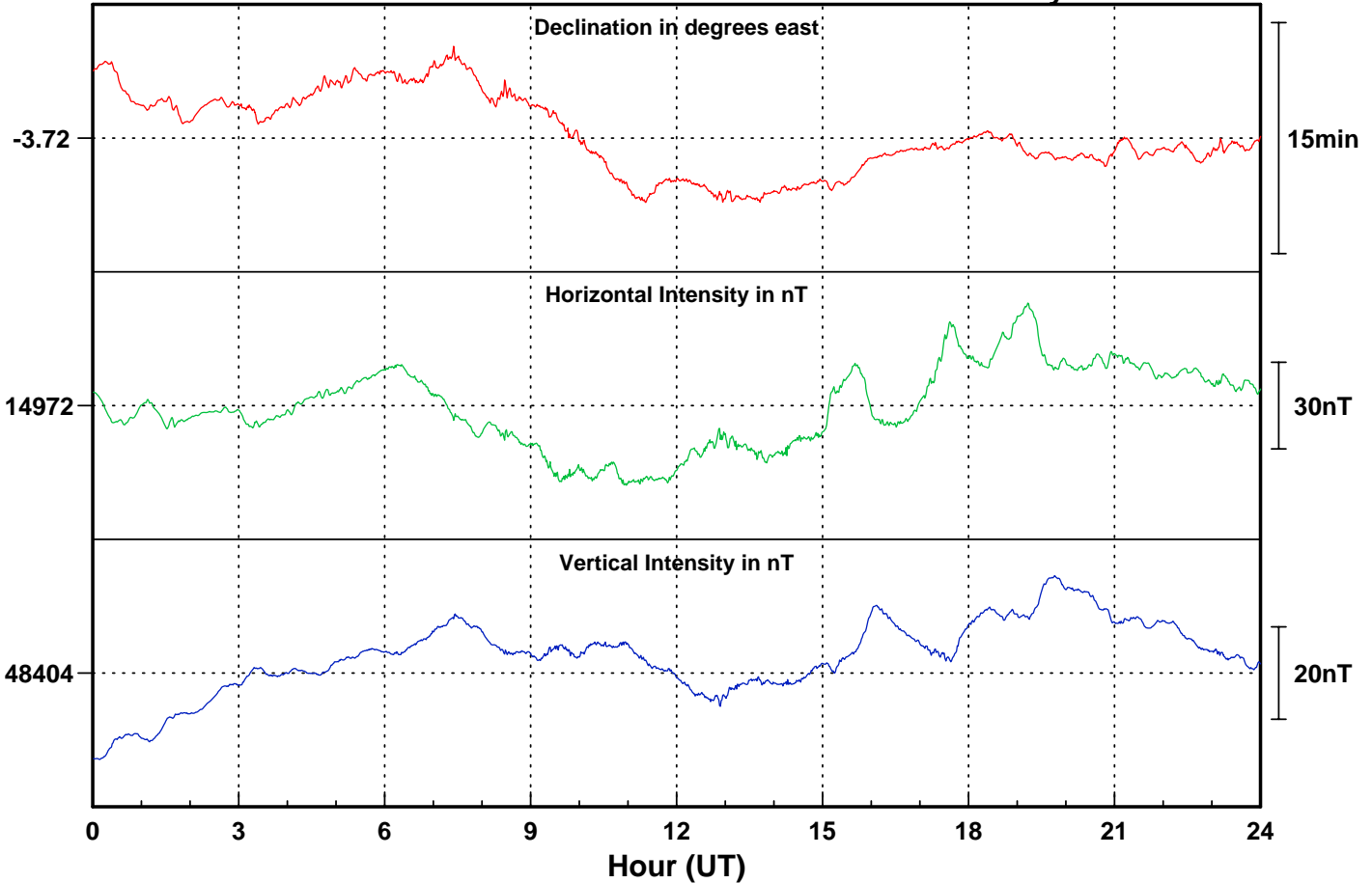
# Lerwick

Day number: 139



Date: 20-05-2006

Day number: 140

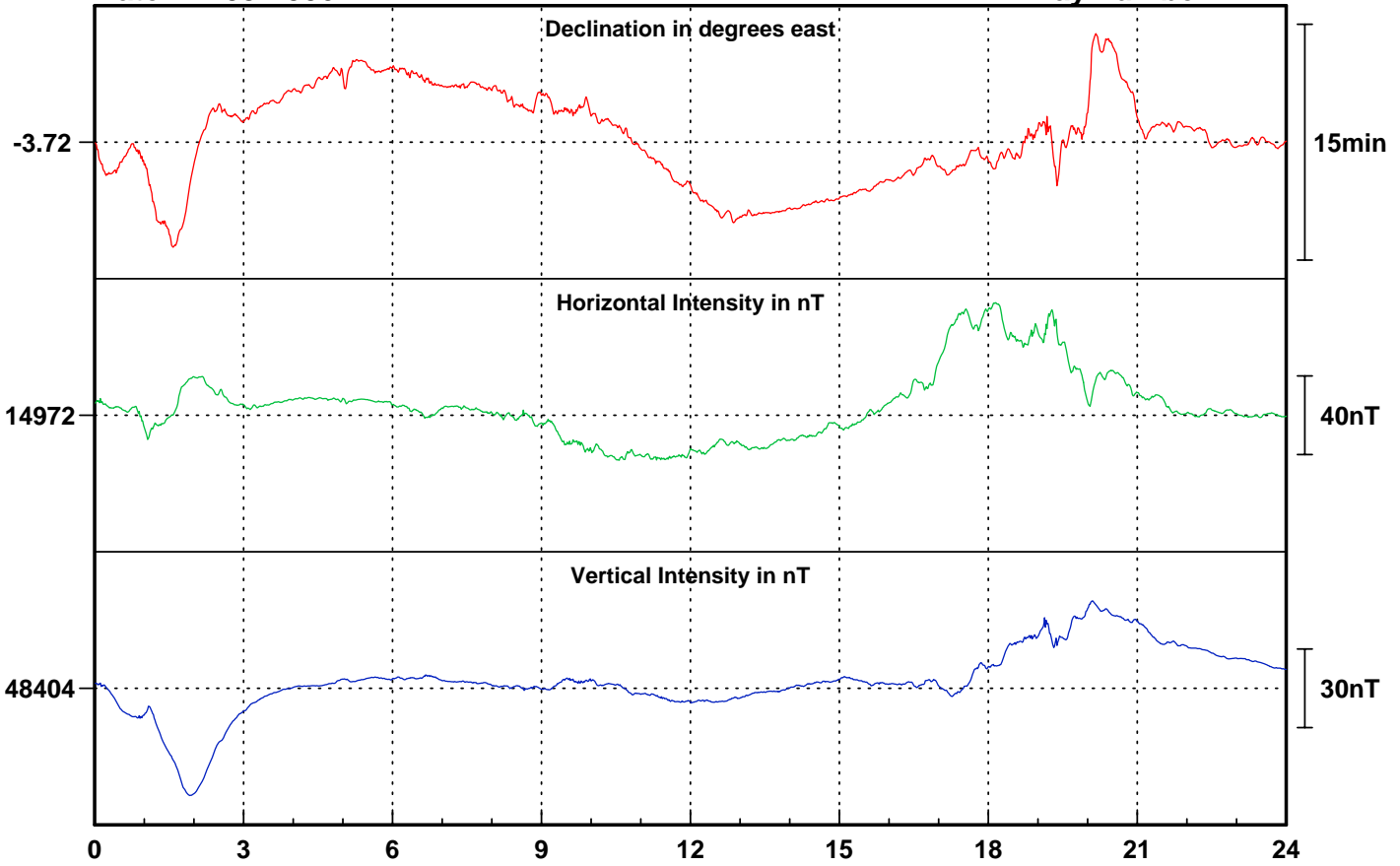




Date: 21-05-2006

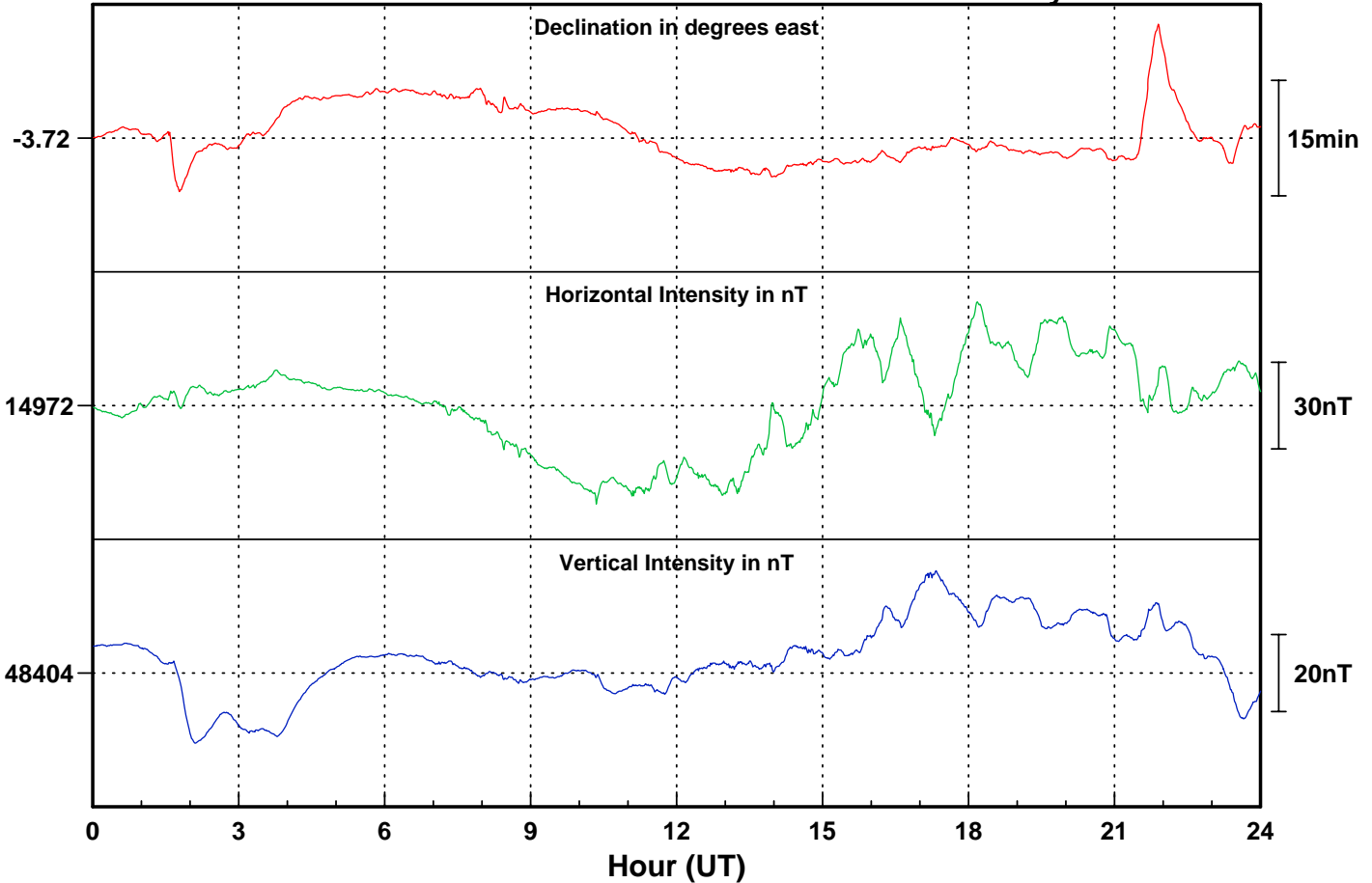
# Lerwick

Day number: 141



Date: 22-05-2006

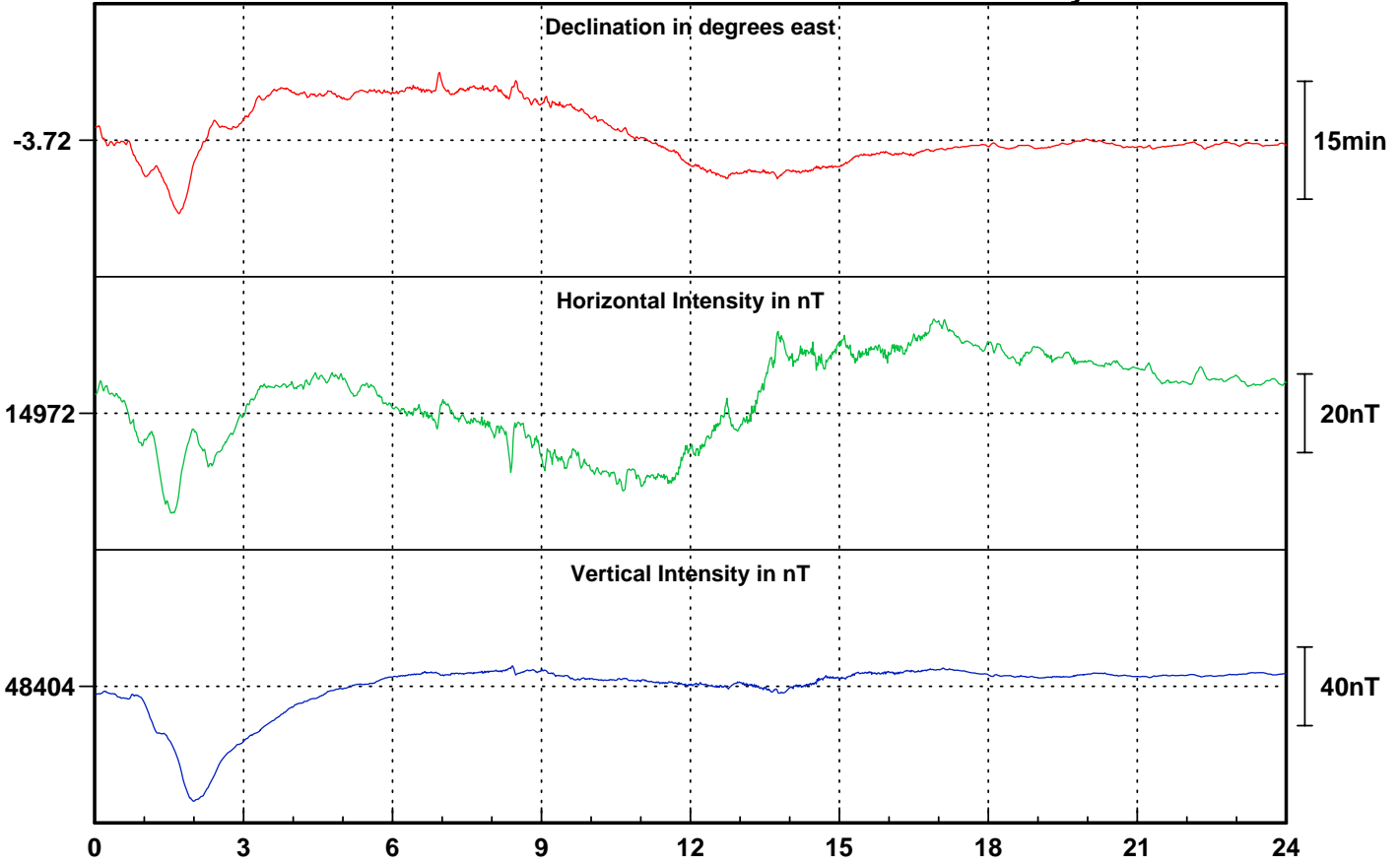
Day number: 142



Date: 23-05-2006

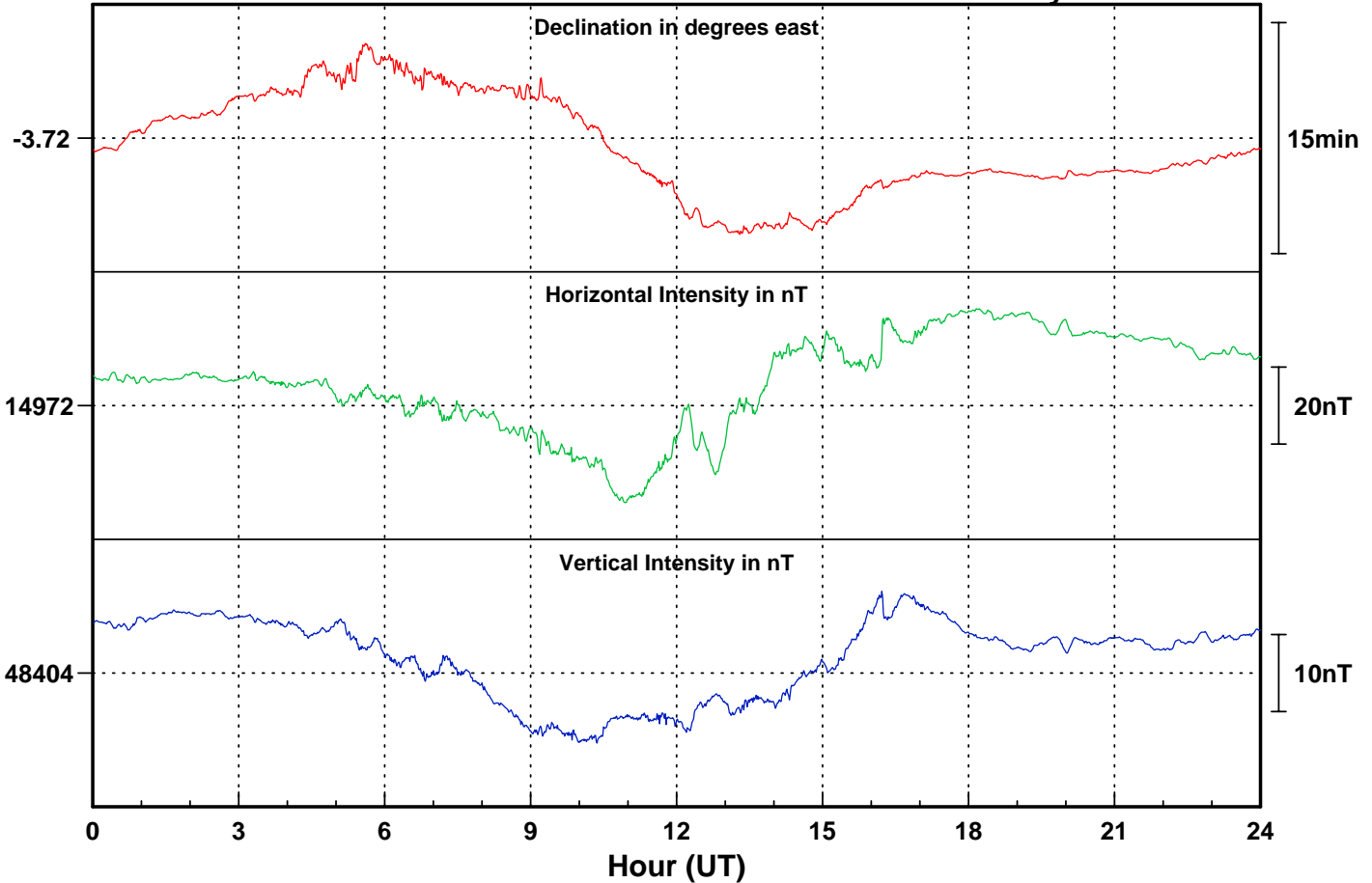
# Lerwick

Day number: 143



Date: 24-05-2006

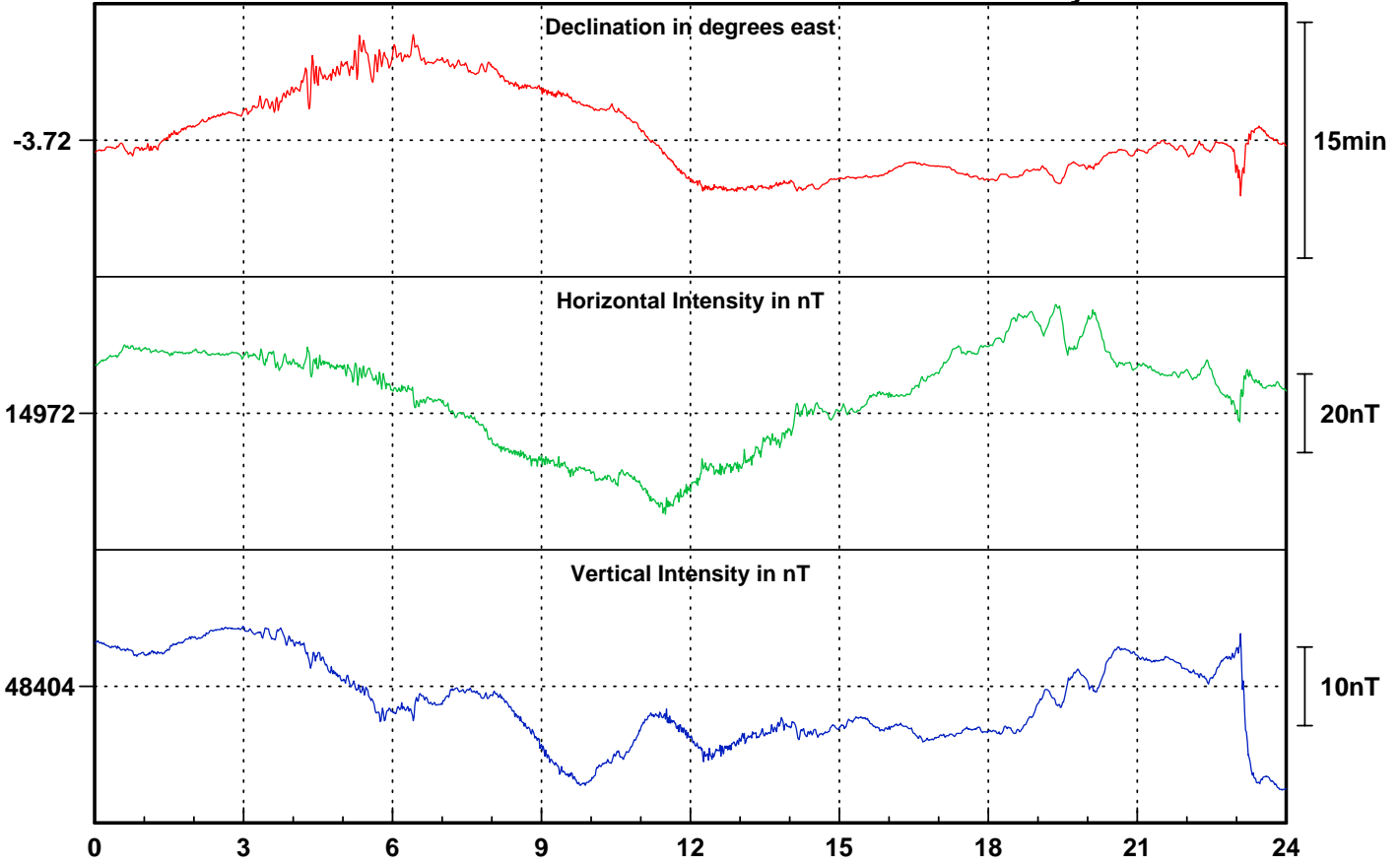
Day number: 144



Date: 25-05-2006

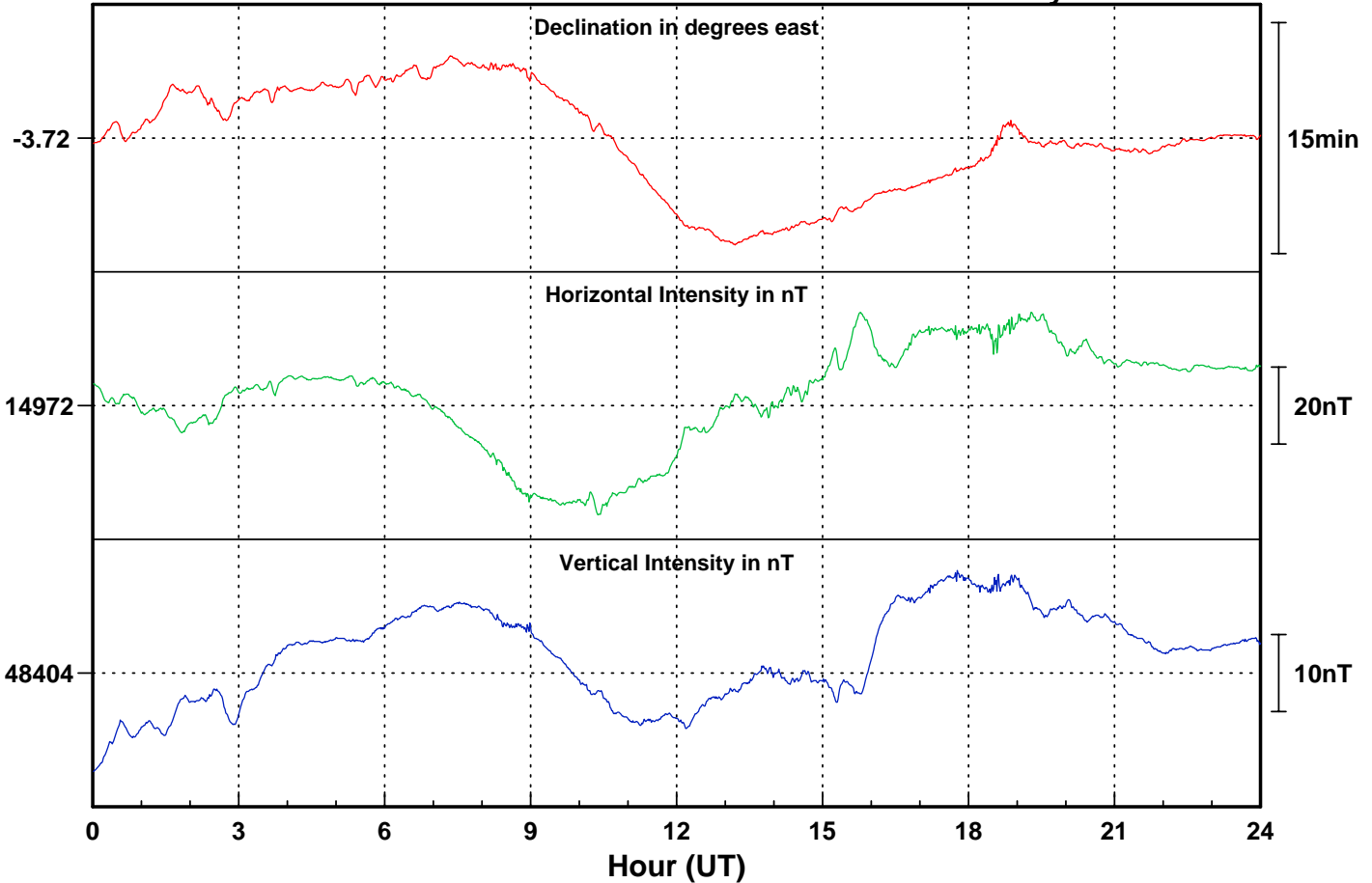
# Lerwick

Day number: 145



Date: 26-05-2006

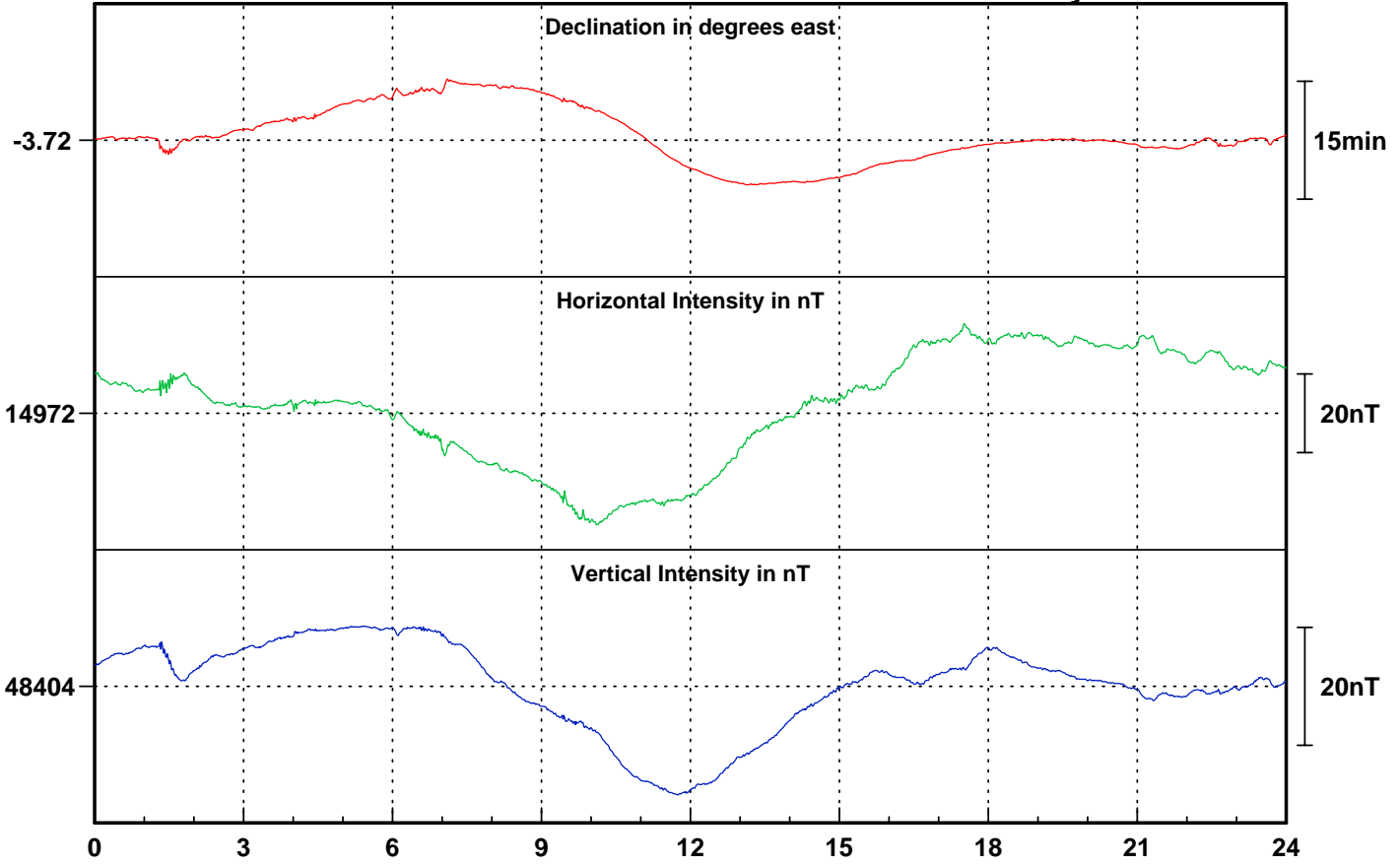
Day number: 146



Date: 27-05-2006

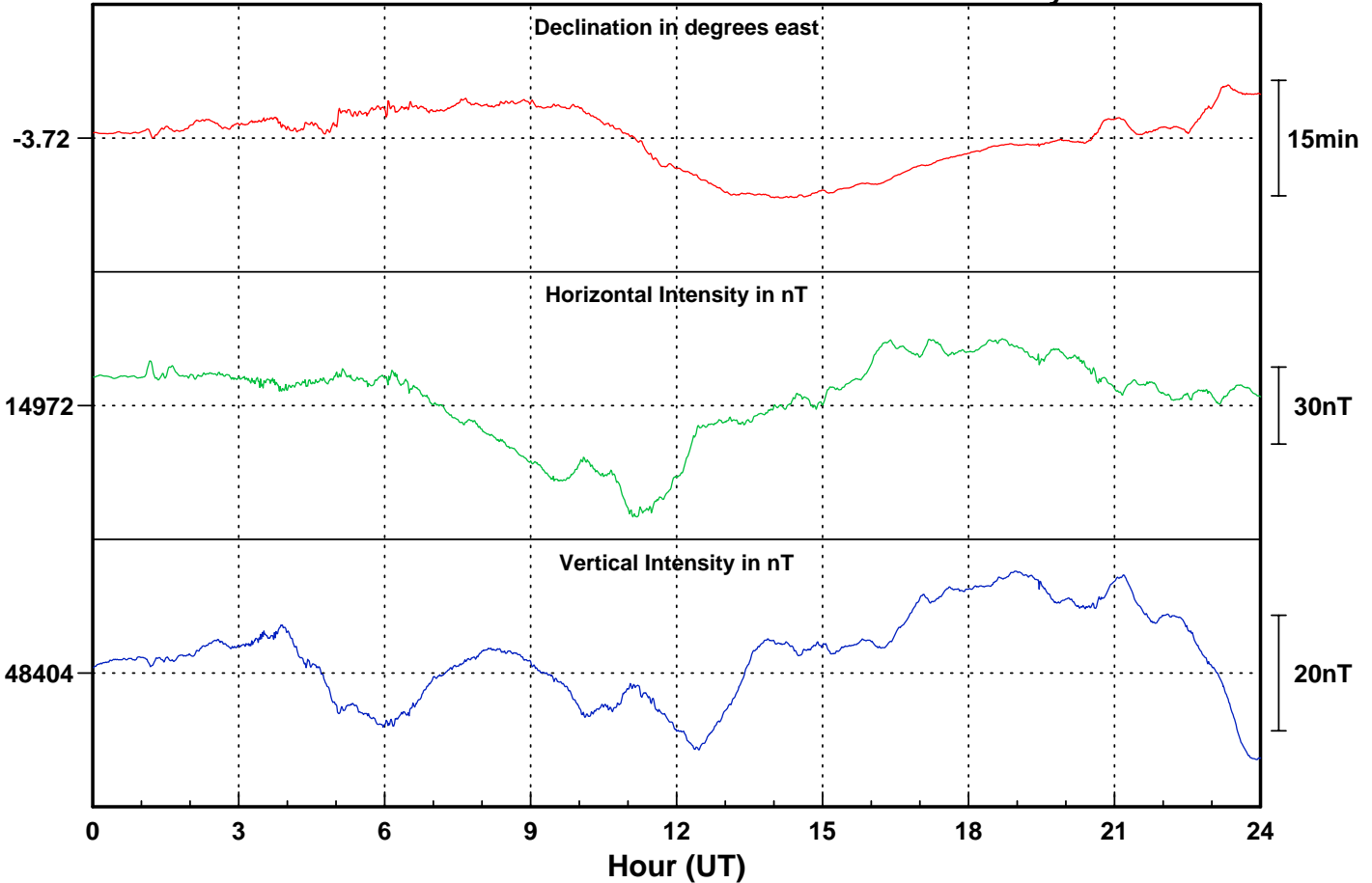
# Lerwick

Day number: 147



Date: 28-05-2006

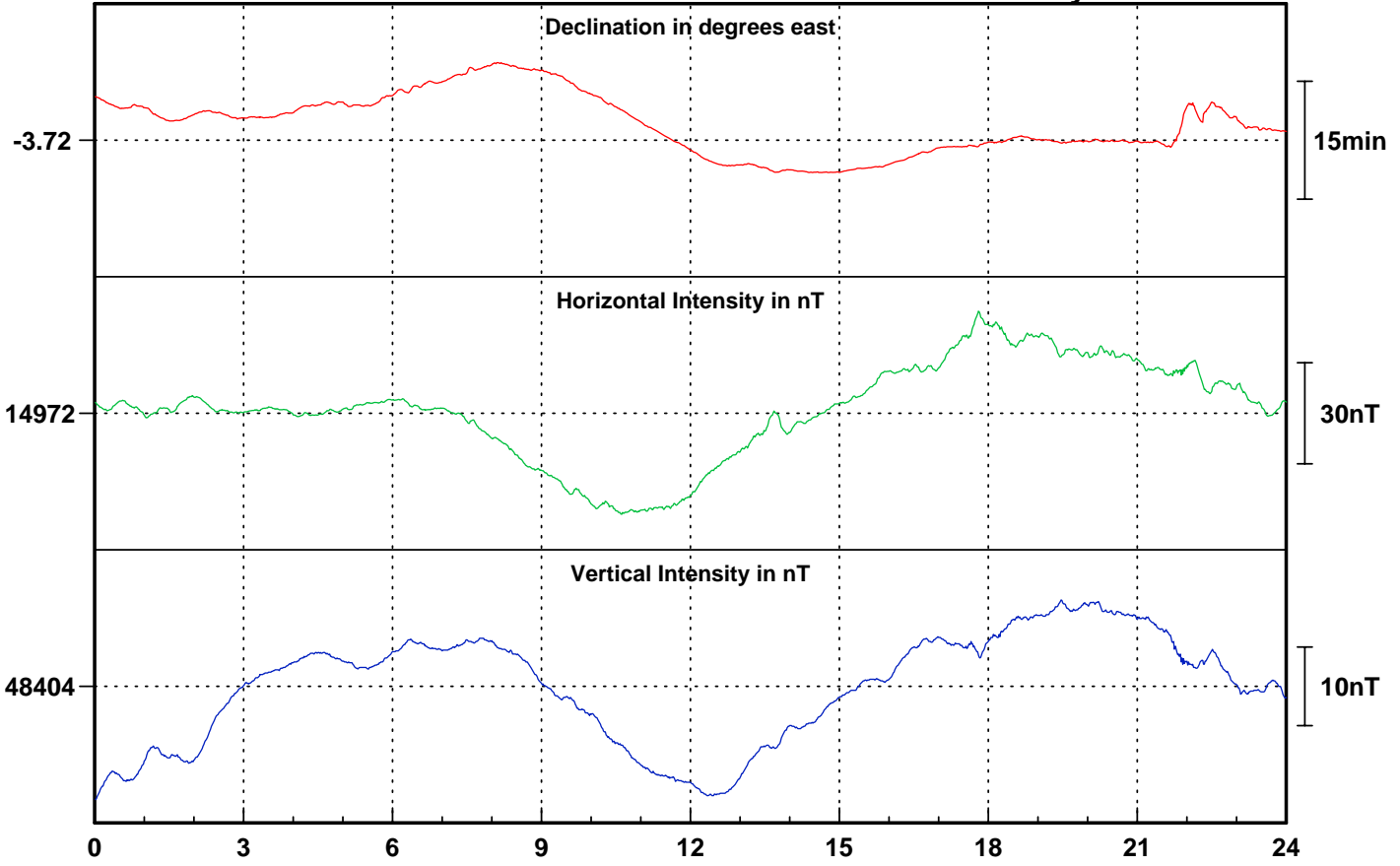
Day number: 148



Date: 29-05-2006

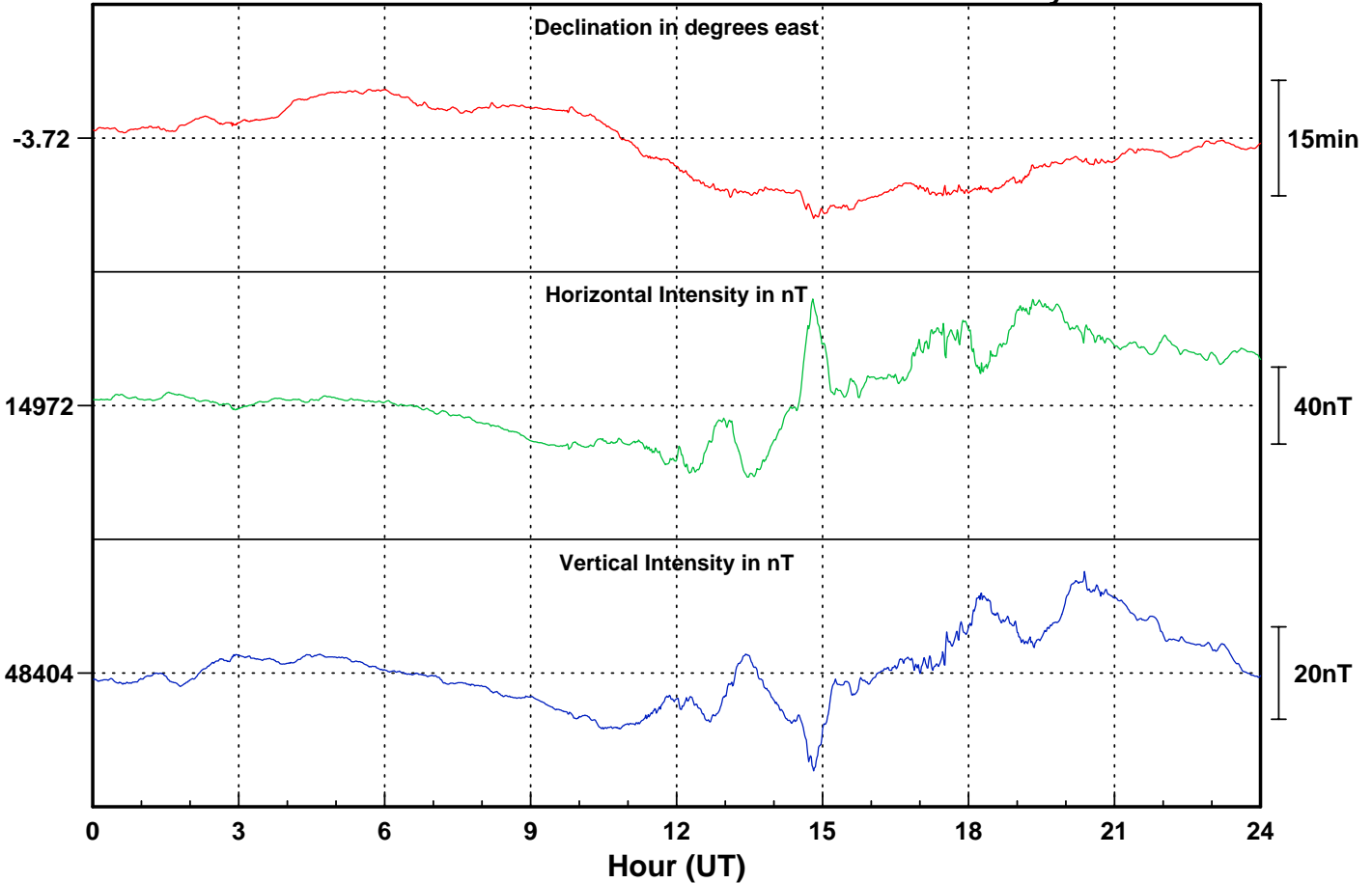
# Lerwick

Day number: 149



Date: 30-05-2006

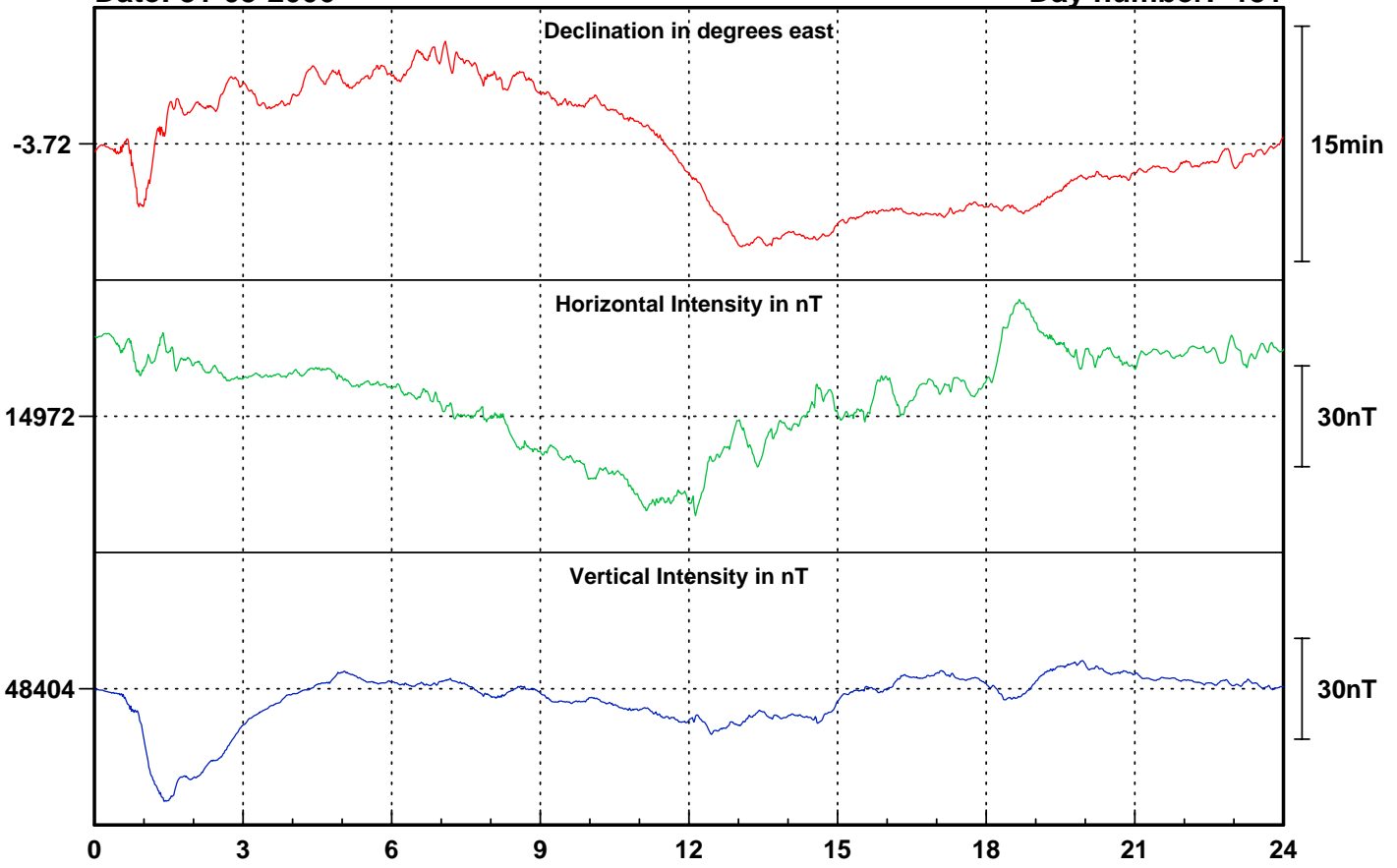
Day number: 150



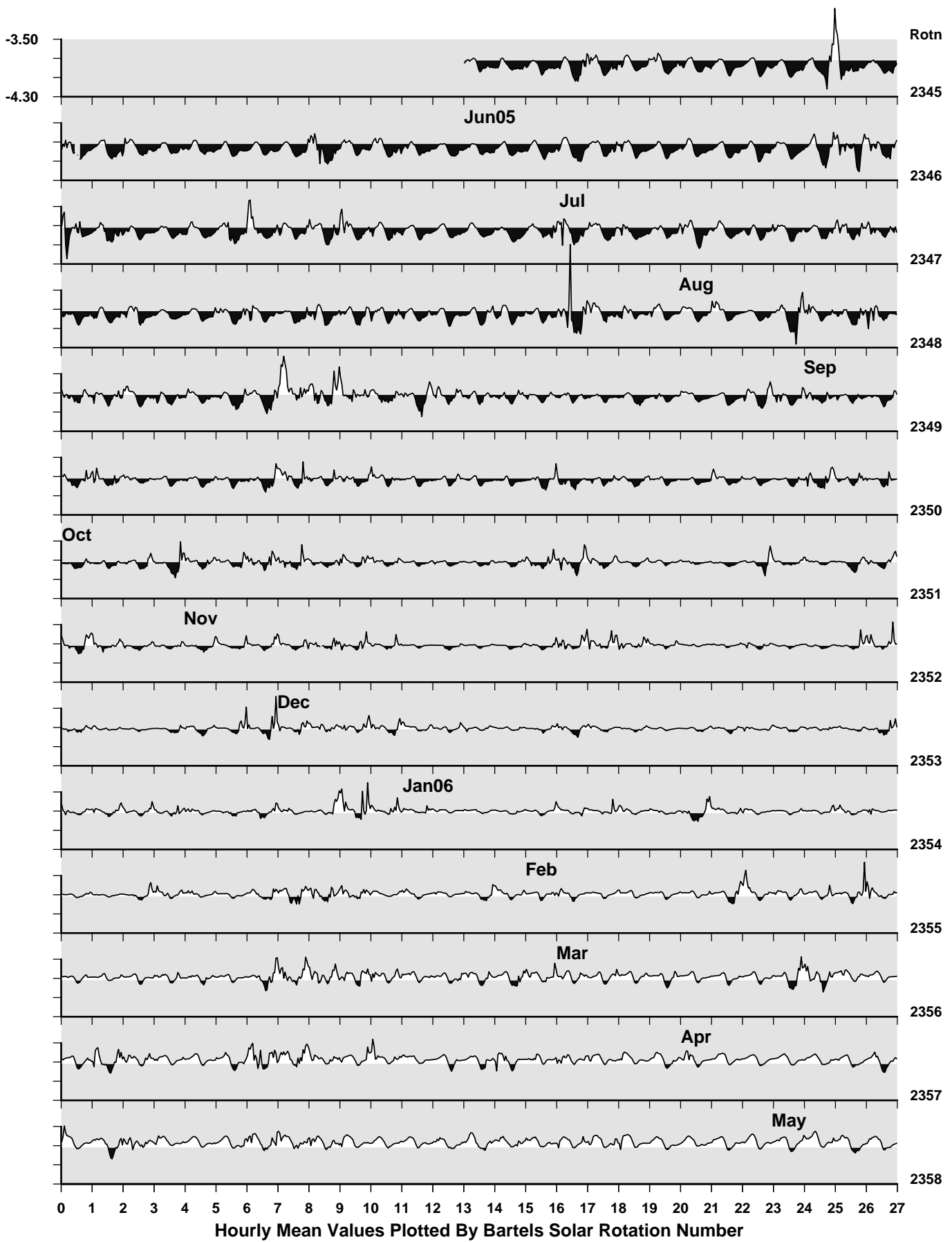
Date: 31-05-2006

# Lerwick

Day number: 151

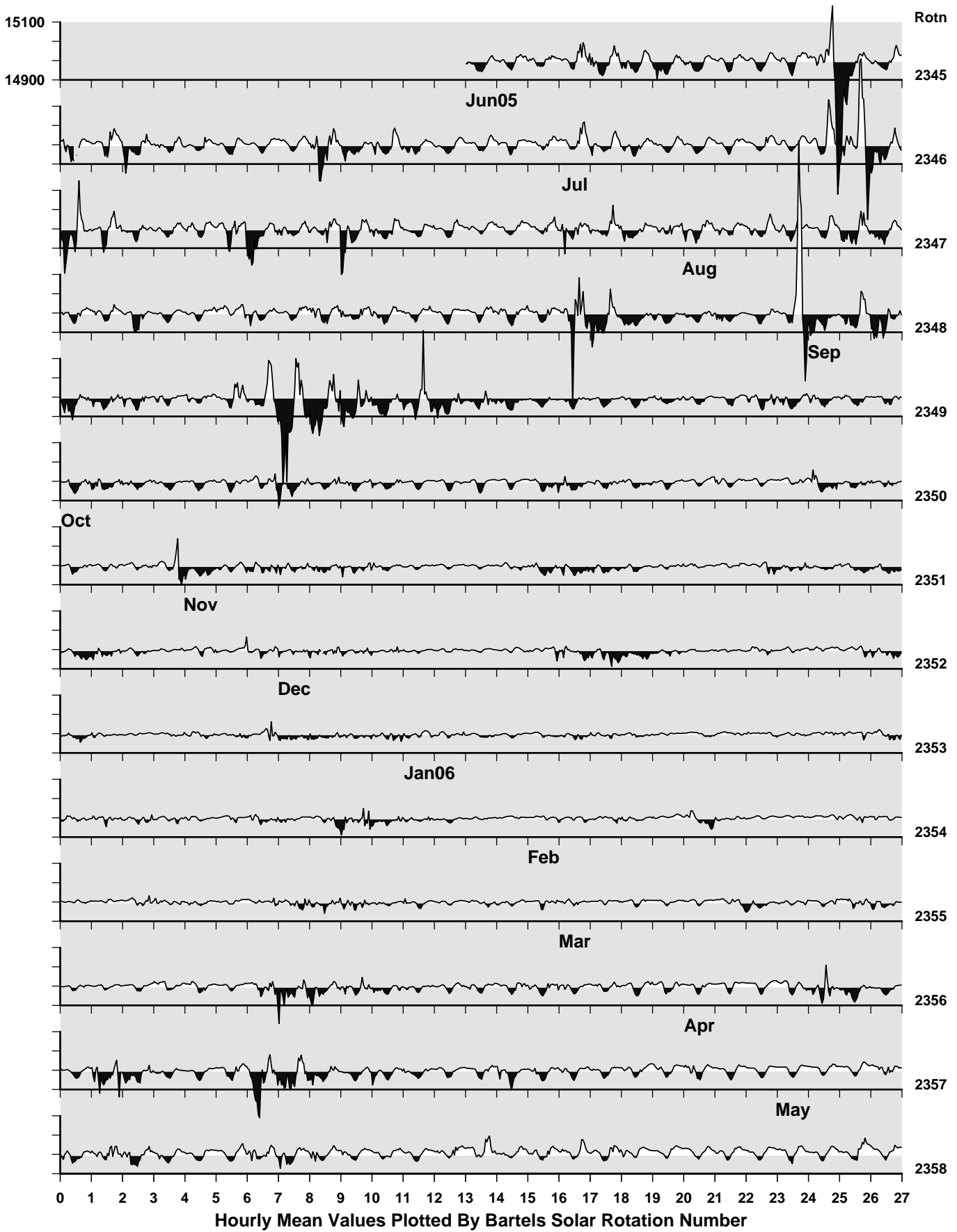


# Lerwick Observatory: Declination (degrees)



Hourly Mean Values Plotted By Bartels Solar Rotation Number

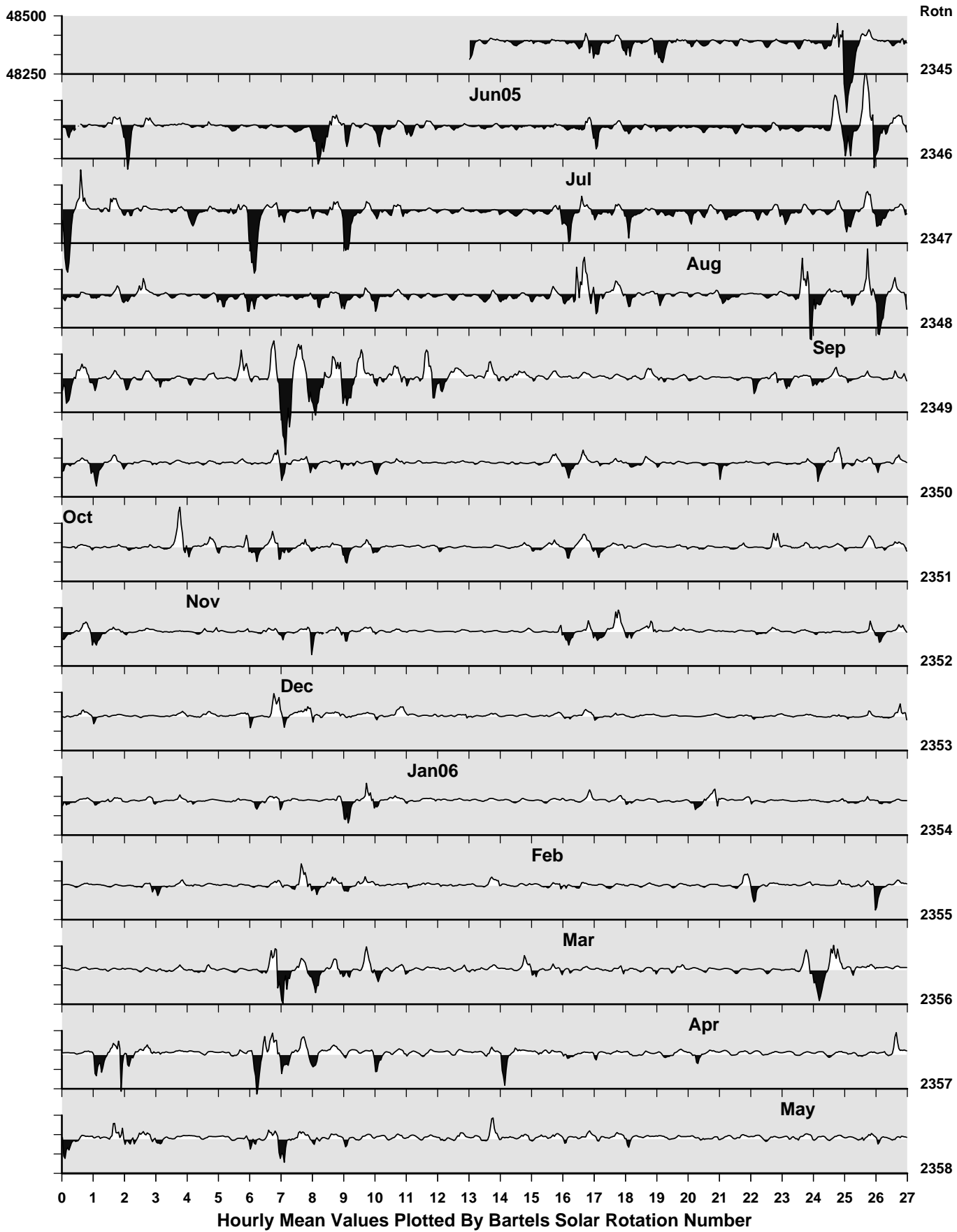
# Lerwick Observatory: Horizontal Intensity (nT)



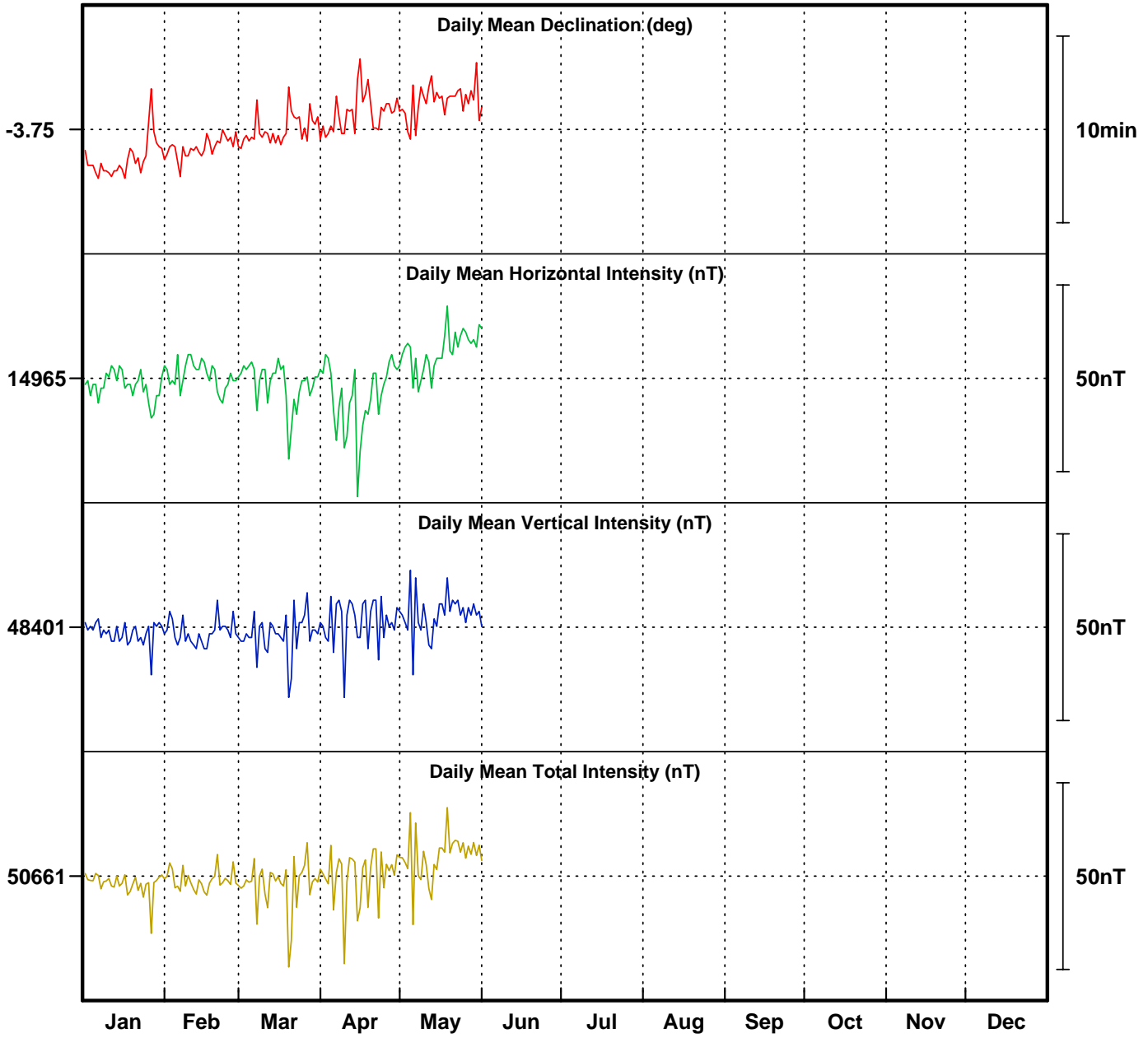
Hourly Mean Values Plotted By Bartels Solar Rotation Number



# Lerwick Observatory: Vertical Intensity (nT)



# Lerwick Observatory 2006



## Monthly Mean Values for Lerwick Observatory 2006

Month	<i>D</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>F</i>
January	-3° 46.4′	14963 nT	72° 49.2′	14930 nT	-985 nT	48399 nT	50659 nT
February	-3° 45.8′	14965 nT	72° 49.1′	14933 nT	-982 nT	48399 nT	50660 nT
March	-3° 44.9′	14963 nT	72° 49.2′	14931 nT	-978 nT	48399 nT	50659 nT
April	-3° 43.9′	14960 nT	72° 49.5′	14928 nT	-974 nT	48402 nT	50661 nT
May	-3° 43.3′	14972 nT	72° 48.7′	14940 nT	-972 nT	48404 nT	50667 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)
30-05-06	09 43	SSC*	B	-2.8	-0.28	-

#### 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

May 2006

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	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	4
3	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
4	0	1	2	1	3	2	2	1	12
5	4	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	10
6	1	2	0	0	3	4	4	3	17
7	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	19
8	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	8
9	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
10	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	6
11	2	4	2	2	3	2	3	3	21
12	4	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	17
13	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	14
14	3	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	9
15	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
16	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
17	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	8
18	1	2	2	2	1	4	4	2	18
19	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	10
20	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	0	9
21	2	0	1	0	1	3	3	1	11
22	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	16
23	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	7
24	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	5
25	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
26	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	4
27	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
28	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	2	8
29	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	5
30	0	1	1	1	4	2	2	1	12
31	2	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	8

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)
01-05-06	121	00100000	00110000	3	4	4	2	3
02-05-06	122	20101111	10101100	7	5	6	6	6
03-05-06	123	10000122	10100011	7	5	4	8	6
04-05-06	124	02214432	00345321	26	32	17	40	29
05-05-06	125	43211111	22223200	18	15	22	11	16
06-05-06	126	12113544	12225533	36	41	12	65	38
07-05-06	127	34433233	23443221	36	30	44	23	33
08-05-06	128	22111111	22221000	10	10	14	6	10
09-05-06	129	10111111	10020201	7	7	7	8	7
10-05-06	130	00001123	00000012	9	5	2	12	7
11-05-06	131	34323434	23343122	40	27	35	32	33
12-05-06	132	43323222	33323212	27	23	31	19	25
13-05-06	133	33112232	33232221	20	21	24	17	21
14-05-06	134	32201111	23121111	12	13	17	8	13
15-05-06	135	11001113	01121100	9	7	7	9	8
16-05-06	136	10001100	10001000	4	4	4	4	4
17-05-06	137	22102311	11011101	13	7	9	11	10
18-05-06	138	12332532	11332331	31	21	21	32	26
19-05-06	139	12211232	22211111	15	11	13	13	13
20-05-06	140	11211321	11230110	13	11	13	10	12
21-05-06	141	31111341	10120121	20	9	11	18	14
22-05-06	142	31112324	10112122	22	10	10	22	16
23-05-06	143	32111100	21101100	10	7	12	5	9
24-05-06	144	01112100	00111100	7	5	6	6	6
25-05-06	145	01111022	01010011	8	5	6	8	7
26-05-06	146	10001210	00002010	6	5	3	8	5
27-05-06	147	10100001	10000000	4	3	4	3	4
28-05-06	148	12122212	11122100	13	9	11	11	11
29-05-06	149	11000212	00000010	8	3	4	7	5
30-05-06	150	11114332	00023220	21	11	7	26	16
31-05-06	151	31112121	10111110	13	7	10	9	10
Monthly mean value =			13.7					

- (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